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FILE No. 181/2/3/4

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

SECRET.

SUBJECT.

MIDDLE EAST

The Arab World

Egypt - Syria - Saudi Arabia Pact

R.P.

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NAA: A1838, 181/2/3/4

Ref:- 9/5/2.

Memo No. 810

28th December 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Egyptian/Saudi Arabian Pact.

I refer to our Memo No. 708 of the 9th November, concerning the Egyptian/Syrian Pact, and the appointment of General Abdul Hakim Amer, the Egyptian Minister of War, as Commander-in-Chief of the joint Egyptian/Syrian Armed Forces.

2. On the 26th December, it was announced in Cairo that Major General Abdul Hakim Amer had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the joint Egyptian/Saudi Armed Forces. In addition, the War Council envisaged in the Egyptian/Saudi Arabian Agreement was set up. These decisions were taken at a meeting of the Supreme Council which met in Riad on the 24th December, under the chairmanship of King Saud.

3. It was also announced that at this meeting Arab policy in general was discussed and, as usual, "complete agreement was reached".

GRD H. D. WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)
First Secretary

orig on 163/11/27
JH 12/1

DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA

It was mentioned in a previous article in the Political Intelligence Bulletin that Syria has identified itself with Egypt in the Bagdad Pact and in seeking to isolate Iraq from the other Arab countries. ^{Hourany} Moreover, it has lately sought to strengthen its ties with the Soviet Union. For example on 10th July, 1955, a Syrian Parliamentary delegation consisting of seventeen members of the Chamber of Deputies visited the U.S.S.R. On 16th November, 1955, a trade agreement was signed by which Syria will export goods including cotton, oil-seeds, vegetable oils, wool and rayon textiles and Russia will supply machinery, industrial equipment, motor cars, lorries, tractors, agricultural equipment, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and other goods. At the same time it was announced in Damascus that Syria has entered into official negotiations with Czechoslovakia for concluding an arms deal similar to that arranged by Egypt. The reasons for these developments may be sought in the complexities of Syrian political life and it is the purpose of this article to describe the relation between recent internal development and current Syrian foreign policy.

2. In the most recent article to appear in the P.I. Bulletin on Syrian affairs it was mentioned that the Western disposed Fares-el-Khoury Government was succeeded on 13th February, 1955, by a government under the leadership of Sabri-el-Assali. This government was a coalition of Left and Right-wing elements and was much less well inclined towards the West than its predecessor. One of its first actions was to announce its readiness to enter into an agreement with Egypt and Saudi-Arabia designed to counter Iraqi participation in the Bagdad Pact.

3. Being a combination of extreme groups the el-Assali Government was inherently unstable. Nevertheless it showed cohesion in regard to foreign policy. It did so because both groups were in agreement on the need for closer ties with Egypt. However, the Left-wing groups under the leadership of Akram Hourani's Ba'ath Socialist Party (which enjoyed considerable influence in the Army) did so from a conviction that a neutralist policy was in Syria's best interests. For its part the Right-wing, under the domination of the Nationalist Party, feared Iraqi ambitions and for that reason looked upon the Bagdad Pact as a cover for the extension of Iraqi hegemony over the Fertile Crescent. A further factor, and this

may have been the most important of all, was the personal ambitions of the Foreign Minister, ~~Kar~~ Khaled el-Azm, who occupied a leading position in the Cabinet. Khaled el-Azm did nothing to oppose Hourani's attempt, in co-operation with the Army, to control the administration because he wished Left-wing support for his candidature of the Presidency. (In Syrian political life the President occupies an important position, in the main because of his power to nominate the Prime Minister).

4. Although el-Azm secured Left-wing support, the Nationalist Party adopted Shukri Quwatly as its candidate. Quwatly also received the support of the other Right-wing parties and independents. His election was therefore assured. In the final ballot (the Syrian President is elected by the Chamber of Deputies) on 18th August, 1955, Quwatly received 91 of the 139 votes cast.

5. The election of Quwatly is probably the most significant event in Syrian politics since the overthrow of Shishkly. He is the only man in Syria who is regarded by a large section of the population as the symbol of national independence. He had been elected President of Syria in 1943 and held this office until 1949 when he was forcibly removed by Husni Zaim, who engineered the first of the series of military coups d'etats. Thereafter he lived in exile in Egypt until his return to Syria just a few weeks before the election. Having received considerable help from Egypt and Saudi-Arabia in the past, it is likely that Quwatly, unlike his predecessor, will seek to further his country's ties with those two Powers.

6. Although the election of the new President became a conflict between the Right and Left-wing elements in the Chamber and therefore brought ~~it~~ to an end the unnatural coalition of Nationalists and Left-wing groups which had been in office since February the expected Right-wing coalition government did not emerge. In accordance with the Constitution, el Assali submitted the resignation of his Cabinet following the inauguration of the new President. Quwatly asked Said el Ghazzy - an Independent - to form an "all-party" coalition. When the Right-wing parties refused to participate el Ghazzy was asked to form a predominantly Right-wing Cabinet. He was unable to do this because of rivalries between the Nationalist and Populist Parties. In the event a coalition of the Populists and the Democratic ~~Block~~ Bloc, a Left-wing group which ~~has~~ broke its alliance with the Ba'ath

Socialists, was formed.

7. The present Government is at least as unstable as its predecessor. However, from the West's point of view it has the advantage that the Populists are in the main favorable to Western and Iraqi interests. Although this tendency has not prevented the el-Chazzi Government from fostering closer ties with the Soviet bloc (see paragraph one above) it has led to the abandonment of the Egyptian inspired proposed Tri-Partite Pact. In its place has been substituted a bilateral agreement between Syria and Egypt which is directed against Israel as much as Iraq. While on both counts it is to be deplored it should not lead to the isolation of Iraq nor does it prevent Syria from eventually joining the Bagdad Pact.

8. The future of Syrian politics is going to depend a good deal on the attitude of the Army, which is under strong Left-wing influence, and its relations with the President. The Army favoured el-Azm's election to the Presidency, Qumratly being unpopular with it. However, Qumratly has done his best to placate the Army by promising to provide it with modern military equipment. In this connexion it is likely that Syrian negotiations with Czechoslovakia for the supply of arms are an attempt to implement this promise. Qumratly's sympathy with Egypt and Saudi-Arabia should strengthen his influence with the Army and counteract the tendency of the Populists to look to the West. Moreover, a close association between the Army and the Opposition has developed and this has strengthened the latter's position in the Chamber. In the face of these pressures it is probably that the el-Chazzi Government despite the pro-Western sympathies of the majority party will continue to compromise.

8.4/4/1.

Memo No. 741

24th November 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Syrian Lebanese Pact.

I refer to para. 3 of our Memo No. 684 of the 3rd November, concerning the possible conclusion of a pact between Syria and Lebanon along the lines of the bilateral military pacts which Egypt has been organising.

2. According to press reports, the Lebanese Prime Minister, Rashid Karamah declared on the 23rd November that he hoped that a Syro-Lebanese Military Pact would be signed within two or three days, "now that the two parties have resolved most of the difficulties which had arisen during the discussions". Karamah added that he would meet the Syrian Premier, Said El Ghazzy, on the 25th November and that the Lebanese Foreign Minister and senior officers of the two countries would be present at the meeting. Press reports from Damascus, however, state that Said El Ghazzy refuses to disclose his intentions with regard to the pact.

3. We understand that, if a pact is signed between these two countries, it is unlikely to be as comprehensive as the Egyptian pacts. It is probable that the pact will be something like a local commander's agreement whereby an Israeli attack on the Lebanese frontier would be met with the aid of Syrian troops, under the command of the Lebanese Commander-in-Chief, and similarly, Lebanon would provide troops for Syria in the event of an Israeli attack on her frontiers.

(Sgd) H D WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

→ 181/2/4

any - 177/11/22

181/2

SAVINGRAM.

181/2/4.
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MMe

I.15110

ACTION
COPY

Dated: 9th November 1955

Rec'd: 17th November 1955
1040

FROM:

Australian High Commission,
L O N D O N.

SAV. 192. SECRET.

Repeated Savingram 148 Washington, Sav. 14 Cairo,
Sav. 6 Tel Aviv, Sav. 36 Paris.

From External.

Our Savingram No. 183 and memorandum No. 926 of
4th November: Middle East.

We have had discussions with the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Relations Office on present United Kingdom policies in the Middle East which are obviously subject to re-formulation in the light of the new Soviet policy for "peaceful penetration" described in our Savingram No. 183. For the time being the United Kingdom is taking things gradually and no dramatic moves are contemplated to counter directly the effect of the Czech arms deal with Egypt. Israel has been told that the United Kingdom cannot compensate her for the increased strength that Egypt has acquired, nor can she be given a security guarantee; and there is no intention of "isolating" Egypt because she has accepted Soviet arms, the first supplies of which have already arrived, together with a few technicians, in Cairo.

2. As a first step the United Kingdom is concentrating on finding ways and means of offering increased support to those countries who already have treaty relations with her and the general aim will be to strengthen the "northern tier" countries. The forthcoming meeting of the Baghdad Pact powers to be held on 21st November and for which invitations will be shortly issued jointly by Iraq and Turkey will provide an opportunity of examining what can be done. The Foreign Office has just sent some preliminary proposals to Baghdad for discussion with the Iraqi authorities and which they hope Iraq will put forward at the meeting. They are anxious that the United Kingdom should not appear to be dominating the meeting and yet at the same time they want to get things going. Their proposals relate to the machinery which might be set up: a Council of Ministers, to meet annually or as the occasions demands; a Council of deputies to meet in between, the representatives on which would be the Ambassadors in Baghdad; and a Military Committee which would carry out joint planning on a fairly continuing basis. They hope to have a representative on this Committee who has had some experience in NATO or SEACDT.

3. As regards membership there is a possibility that Jordan will accede to the pact in the near future. Turkey is anxious that she should join and her Ambassador in Amman

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177/7/1	181/6/11	181/11/3
205/7/1		

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has pointed out that by joining now Jordan would gain several advantages; she would secure Turkey as an ally on the spot against Israeli aggression, and that she would be likely to gain more financial and military assistance as a member of the pact. The Foreign Office instructed the British Ambassador to support the Turkish representations but has cautioned that not too much pressure should be brought to bear on the Jordan Government. The United Kingdom would like to see Jordan in the pact although recognizing that there is a danger of a strong Egyptian reaction. They feel this is a risk that has to be taken and that there are advantages in having Jordan join when she is ready to do so.

4. Turkey and Iraq are likewise keen that the Lebanon should join and the Iraqi Embassy has been making soundings in Beirut. The Foreign Office favours the pressure Iraq is bringing to bear but are taking no action themselves for the time being. They think the Iraq action is a useful counter to Syrian efforts to bring Lebanon into the treaty framework established by Egypt in her pacts with Syria and with Saudi Arabia.

5. The Foreign Office mentioned that the United States has informed Turkey through its Embassy in Ankara that they wish for closer co-ordination between the United States Government and the Baghdad powers and that they are willing to set up a permanent liaison with the Council--the State Department has in mind that their Ambassador in Baghdad might be appointed as Permanent Observer on the Council and that an officer should be appointed to the military committee. The Embassy added that the United States present attitude does not exclude the possibility of American accession at a future date. The other Baghdad powers have been similarly advised of United States views. At the same time the American representatives in Amman and Beirut have warned the Jordan and Lebanese Governments against associating themselves with the Egyptian-Syrian pact.

6. In preparation for the forthcoming Baghdad meeting and as a consequence of recent developments in the Middle East the Foreign Office informed us that all aspects of United Kingdom supply of arms to Middle East countries are under detailed re-appraisal by Ministers. To date it has been decided that the supply of arms to Iraq will be stepped up and that supplies to Jordan and Lebanon will be continued. The United Kingdom also has under consideration a gift of a considerable quantity of arms and equipment for Libya and hope thereby that Libya will not accept an offer of military assistance from Egypt.

7. The Foreign Office recognizes that her support for the Baghdad powers will annoy Egypt, particularly if Jordan and later the Lebanon join. As mentioned above they feel this is a risk that has to be taken and are hoping that over a period of time they will be able to give indications that United Kingdom is pursuing a friendly policy. They do not intend to browbeat Egypt because she has accepted Czech arms. At present the main way in which they hope to help Egypt is

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over the High Aswan Dam project for which the Egyptian Government has already contracted a firm of British Consulting Engineers. The Egyptian Government's problem is to find finance for this project amounting to some £500 million. A consortium consisting of German, French and English firms is the furthest advanced with the technical plans for the Dam, and the United Kingdom has decided (i) it is of the greatest importance that the contract for the project be obtained by the consortium and (ii) every effort should be made to secure additional external financial assistance for Egypt (to this end arrangements are now being made for early consultations with the French and German Governments). An alternative facing the Egyptian Government is for them to seek a loan from the International Bank, but here there are difficulties: firstly that the Bank takes a considerable time to evaluate a request for a loan and secondly the Bank is known to have doubts as to whether the Egyptian economy is sufficiently strong to bear the burden of interest payments which would be involved. The Foreign Office say they are hoping that ways may be found of meeting this problem without Egypt's having to obtain a Bank loan because the Bank would require that the contract should be put out to international tender. Foreign Office added that Russia is known to have made an offer of technical assistance for the Dam project but the Egyptians have not taken this very seriously so far.

8. The foregoing represents merely some preliminary considerations affecting the United Kingdom's policies which must necessarily develop on a piecemeal and day by day basis, and we shall report further details as they become known to us.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE.
P.M.'s.

17th November, 1955.

SEC A/Ss MR LOOMES MR CRITCHLEY MR UPTON MR QUINN
MR BOOKER MR INGRAM@

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..MFP

I. 15113

Sent: 10th November, 1955

Rec'd: 17th November, 1955
1040

FROM:

Australian High Commission,
L O N D O NSAV. 194 S E C R E T

From External.

Your savingram 104.

Anti-Subversion activities of S.E.A.T.O.

I have discussed this matter with Denis Allen, using your savingram and also your memorandum No. 520 as a brief. I told him that, although we were in general against the creation of new committees responsible to the Council representatives - we thought in fact there might already be too many of these - our feeling was that counter-subversion and related activities needed stimulation and proper co-ordination if they were to receive the attention that we felt should be given to them by the Council. So far all that had been done was an appreciation of the scope of the problem. The Council would now have to get down to considering individual cases of Communist subversion, establishing evidence, and recommending counter measures. We doubted whether existing committees on Anti-Subversion and on Information were really equipped to do the job. Besides, their activities were closely related, and at the least some co-ordination was needed at the working level. The Council representatives were scarcely in a position to provide an effective working link. Experience had shown also that the Asian members of SEATO needed to be stimulated into taking a more practical and intelligent interest in the working of committees, contributing more effectively and making their needs known. We therefore had in mind proposing the establishment under the Council representatives of a fairly high level standing Committee which could give its full time to directing and co-ordinating the work of the Anti-Subversion and Information Committees. We were asking all S.E.A.T.O. Governments for their views.

2. Allen asked first of all what sort of a committee we envisaged, and at how high a level. Would it be composed of technical experts in the field, or would members be drawn from regular staffs of missions? He saw a staffing problem arising if it was the intention that committee members should be free to give the whole or almost the whole of their time to this work. I said that I was not sure what we had in mind, but that I presumed the representatives would need to have a certain amount of expertise.

3. Allen said that he fully agreed with our objective; the Anti-Subversion side of S.E.A.T.O. must be pressed on with. Examination of the scope of the problem did not take us very far; agreement was needed on what practical steps should now be taken. He also agreed that the Asians

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should be encouraged to take a more positive part in the work of committees. The calibre of Thai representation in particular has been deplorably inadequate. At the same time he wondered whether this was the right way of going about it. His preliminary off-the-cuff reactions were two-fold:

(a) he did not much like the idea of creating another committee, particularly one which would introduce a new level in the organisational framework. I repeated that we too were in principle against the establishment of new committees, but that we felt there was an urgent need for something of this kind. Allen rather doubted whether such a standing committee, with full time membership, was justified at this stage, though he agreed that the need for it could emerge in the light of future experience.

(b) rightly or wrongly, United Kingdom policy was opposed to anything that suggested co-ordination of specialist Anti-Subversion measures at the operational level. The United Kingdom view remained that security and counter-subversion measures, extending as they did into the field of secret intelligence and operations, must remain the primary responsibility of individual governments. He feared that a committee of the kind we had in view might with the best of intentions find itself probing into delicate fields and making embarrassing recommendations. It would inevitably be difficult to draw the line between what the committee should and should not make recommendations about. The United Kingdom could not risk having its own activities compromised. In Malaya, for example, a beginning would very soon be made to indoctrinate the new Federation Government into security and related procedures, in preparation for their assumption of responsibility for security, and as part of their training for ultimate participation in S.E.A.T.O. This would be a somewhat delicate operation, because while gradually handing over the machinery of internal security to the Malaysians the United Kingdom would be intent on preserving its own network. This was the kind of situation in which a standing committee in Bangkok, if it was doing its job actively, might inevitably want to interest itself, with possibly embarrassing consequences.

4. I said that we understood United Kingdom misgivings on this account, but there was surely a wide range of what could generally be called Anti-Subversion activity that did not impinge on secret and delicate activity, and we would think that members of S.E.A.T.O., particularly those with experience in security measures, could go a good way in explaining their policies and actions without compromising themselves. Allen did not disagree, but he still doubted whether a new committee was the answer. The essential thing, in his view, was that individual countries and governments should be exhorted and taught to establish and enforce efficient and appropriate measures - to combat subversion and preserve security in their own territories. His own view was that the next step, now that the scope of the problem had been examined, might be to look at existing resources for combating subversion, and to find out which countries needed help and advice, and how it might be provided. He felt that there was still a great deal that could be done towards ensuring that the essential groundwork existed for dealing with subversion. There might be more training courses, for instance for police and security officers, such as had been carried on with modest success in Malaya for the Thais. He felt that this was one of

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the first things that S.E.A.T.O. could usefully tackle.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE
P.M.'S

17th November, 1955

SEC A/Ss S&SEA INF DL

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CONFIDENTIAL

S.4/4/1.

Memo No. 716.

16th November 1955.

CONFIDENTIAL.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Syrian Foreign Policy.

I refer to para. 4 of our Memo No. 684 of the 3rd November concerning the possibility of a bilateral Military Pact being arranged between Iraq and Syria.

2. On the 13th November, the Syrian Prime Minister, Said El Ghazzy, announced that Syria would not conclude a bilateral Defence Agreement with Iraq and that she considered the Arab Collective Security Pact sufficient guarantee of Iraq's support for the Arab countries in case of Israeli aggression against any one of them. He added that he would visit Iraq but could not at present fix a date for this visit. At the same time as he made this statement, the Prime Minister referred to the proposed bilateral Agreement between Syria and Lebanon and gave a hint that this pact would not be signed when he said that "there was complete understanding between the two countries, whether the pact is concluded or not".

3. In a somewhat barbed reply to El Ghazzy's statement, a spokesman for the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said in Baghdad on the 14th November, "that he was pleased to see that El Ghazzy had been convinced of Iraq's point of view, which calls for obviating the conclusion of too many bilateral agreements and for taking the Arab Collective Security Pact as a basis for cooperation between the Arab States in the event of aggression. This should have been obvious to Said El Ghazzy"

4. Latest press reports from Damascus claim that negotiations for an arms deal between Syria and Czechoslovakia, on the same lines as the recent Egypt/Czech Agreement, are in their final stages. According to these reports, the negotiations began a fortnight ago but Syria was waiting until she had obtained a ten million dollar loan from Saudi Arabia before closing the deal. It is known that Syria has succeeded in obtaining this loan but no details of its conditions are yet available and we have been unable to confirm whether or not Syria is, in fact, about to negotiate such an arms deal.

5. A copy of this memo is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

(Sgd) H. D. WHITE

(H.D. White)

Charge d'Affaires a.i.

→ 1. Europe App. see
2. F 181/2/4

20/11

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 12/5/3.

Memo No. 703.

9th November 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN PACT.

I refer to our Memo No. 672 of the 27th October 1955, concerning the military pact concluded between Syria and Egypt.

2. On the 8th November, the Egyptian and Syrian Prime Ministers signed the Egyptian-Syrian Pact and exchanged instruments of ratification at a ceremony held at the Presidency in Cairo. It was later announced that General Abdul Hakim Amer, the Egyptian Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, has been entrusted with the joint command of the Egypt-Syria Armed Forces provided for in the agreement.

3. There have been no further public developments concerning a Lebanese-Syrian Pact or an Iraqi-Syrian Pact. It is worth noting, however, that, despite the rift between Iraq and Egypt, following the Israeli attack at El-Sabha, the Iraqis immediately offered to "render all military aid to Egypt to repel any Israeli aggression" and informed the Egyptian government that "Iraq was fully prepared to implement its obligations under the Arab League Collective Security Pact". That Iraq made this offer was subsequently denied by some sections of the Egyptian Press.

→ 181/2/4

(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

any on 16/11/55

SECRET

4th November, 1955.

SECRET.

Memo No. 926

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Middle East Alignments.

In the past few weeks the Middle East, under the growing intensity of border incidents around Israel and the impact of Soviet blandishments in the way of arms to Egypt and other Arab states, has once again taken on an atmosphere of continual crisis. In the midst of all this we get the impression that the Arabs, so far from presenting a united front, are in some confusion. The Arab League pact seems to have been forgotten; driven by mutual suspicions they are evidently casting around for security wherever they can find it, and a fascinating pattern of possible combinations and even permutations is developing. The present state of play is somewhat as follows:

1. Baghdad Pact. The treaty between Iraq and Turkey with the United Kingdom and Pakistan subsequently acceding, undoubtedly undermined the Arab League and helped to create the present pattern of confusion. The Egyptians immediately recognised it as a threat to their vaunted and indeed hitherto unchallenged leadership of the Arab states, and immediately turned their efforts towards gathering Syria first, and as many others as they could command, into a rival bloc.
2. Accession of Iran to Baghdad Pact. This move, carried through by the Persians themselves even though deprecated by the United Kingdom and the United States, could not fail to annoy the Egyptians and offend the Russians. Its first consequence has apparently been the cessation of Soviet purchasing of Persian rice, resulting in appeals from the Persian authorities for help in disposing of their surplus crop. There is some possibility that Iraq, which is suffering a temporary food shortage, may help.
3. Egypt - Syria - Saudi Arabia. Egypt can doubtless claim that her efforts have borne fruit in the shape of her agreement with Syria last month, followed shortly afterwards by a similar agreement with Saudi Arabia. (I assume you will have had texts from Cairo).
4. Iraq - Lebanon - Jordan. Not to be outdone, Nuri-el-Said has come forward in the last few days with plans for bilateral economic pacts with Lebanon and Jordan. He has received discreet encouragement from the United Kingdom, and a warm invitation has gone to both Lebanon and Jordan to send representatives to Baghdad. The Jordan Prime Minister is reported to be strongly in favour.
5. Iraq - Lebanon. The Iraqi Government have also told the Lebanese that they would be willing to discuss a bilateral military agreement. There is already such an agreement between Iraq and Jordan.

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orig on 181/1/3
/6. Iraq-Syria.

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6. Iraq - Syria. Meanwhile Syria is showing some signs of wanting to have a bit both ways. The Syrians have been putting out feelers for both an economic and a military agreement with Iraq, apparently as a balance to their bilateral agreement with Egypt. Nuri, after some hesitation (he was inclined not to respond until Syria had a more friendly regime), has now said that Iraq would be willing to discuss both, and the Syrian Prime Minister is reported to be pleased. There is room for suspicion, however, that the Egyptians may have put the Syrians up to this in the hope of being able to draw the Iraqis into their own net by means of interlocking agreements with Syria.

7. Iraq - Jordan - Lebanon - Syria. The Iraqis say they would like a multilateral military agreement between these four, and hope to work towards it.

8. Possible Accession of Jordan to Baghdad Pact. The Turkish President, when he makes his forthcoming visit to Amman, intends to speak in favour of Jordan's early accession to the pact.

9. Syria - Lebanon. Independent efforts by the Syrians to cast a fly over the Lebanese do not yet seem to have met with much success. The Lebanese Prime Minister, M. Karame, whose leanings are anti-Western, visited Damascus on 28th October and held out hopes that Lebanon would be ready to sign a Syrian-Lebanese bilateral pact. However, when the Syrian Prime Minister came to Beirut on the following day he seems to have got short shrift from the Lebanese President, who asserted that Lebanon would not join a pact which excluded Iraq. The President would agree to nothing more than a continuance of staff talks between the Syrian and Lebanese General Staffs on the question of joint defence of the Israeli frontier.

10. Syria - Jordan. There are also reports of Syrian overtures towards Jordan, and the United Kingdom Ambassador in Amman has expressed to King Hussein the hope that the Jordan Government will not let themselves be drawn into the framework of the Syrian-Egyptian treaty. The King has said that this would not happen.

11. Turkey - Syria. The Turkish Government have instructed their Ambassador at Damascus to try to get the Syrian Government to elucidate their attitude to Turkey and the Baghdad Pact following their recent agreement with Egypt. The Ambassador is also to invite the Syrian Government to conclude a treaty of friendship with Turkey, pointing out that it would not be possible for the two countries, with their long common frontier, to maintain satisfactory relations without some such agreement.

12. Russia - Yemen. The Yemeni Government, according to press reports, have got in on the act by signing (with the Soviet Representative in Cairo), a renewal for five years of the Yemeni-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Commerce which expired in 1954. Provision is said to have been made for an exchange of diplomatic representatives in the future.

2. As will be evident, the pattern is at present somewhat fluid, and it is difficult to see what shape it may eventually settle into--if indeed it is allowed to settle. From the Western point of view it is hard to see much cause for optimism. Even the few moderate and responsible leaders among the Arabs who are determined not to sup with the devil show little sign of dropping the common obsession with Israel.

/3. As regards.

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3. As regards Israel, I believe that the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary encouraged Mr. Sharett in Geneva to think about the possibility of some sort of settlement with Jordan as the least intransigent of her Arab neighbours, and that Mr. Sharett admitted that relations with Jordan were not impossible and reaffirmed Israel's preparedness to talk with any Arab country. Mr. Ben Gurion is today reported to have expressed his willingness to meet Colonel Nasser and "every other Arab ruler as soon as possible to achieve a mutual settlement without prior conditions". But the latest serious flare-up of fighting along the Israeli-Egyptian border must surely be regarded as not only unhelpful but ominous.

4. In all the welter of reported arms transactions and threatened transactions with the Soviet Union the Egyptians have cast themselves not only as recipients but as potential donors of arms. They have lately offered a gift of arms to the Government of Libya, who have appealed for help and guidance to the United Kingdom, at the same time letting it be known unmistakably that the Egyptian offer will be hard to turn down. The United Kingdom authorities are now seeking Cabinet approval for a British gift of arms for Libya of up to approximately £50,000 in value, but will first want an assurance from the Libyan Prime Minister that he would not accept the Egyptian offer.

5. The generally malign influence of Saudi Arabia, and particularly of Saudi dollars, has had its latest manifestation in the Buraimi affair. Even allowing for traditional Iraqi animosity towards Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Nuri was unusually vehement in a recent outburst to the United Kingdom Ambassador about Saudi behaviour. He spoke about Saudi bribery in Syria, not least among the army, and also in Jordan, the Lebanon and Egypt, and described it as both a disgrace and a danger to the Arab world. He reverted to one of his favourite themes, that the United States should find some means of cutting off, or threatening to cut off, the flow of dollars to Saudi Arabia, which he said was undermining both politics and standards of behaviour in the Middle East.

6. To end on a possibly more hopeful note, the Baghdad Pact countries are likely to meet very shortly and constitute their council. The Iraqis are pressing for it, and have asked the United Kingdom to make available an officer with first hand experience of military machinery, secretarial and security arrangements under NATO. The United Kingdom would like the meeting to begin on 21st November, and the Foreign Secretary is tentatively planning to leave Geneva for Baghdad on 19th November. Formal invitations are likely to be issued either by the Iraqi and Turkish Governments in concert, as founder members of the pact, or by the Iraqi Government alone as the host, and the meeting is expected to last about two days.

7. I am sending copies of this memorandum to the Australian Legations in Cairo and Tel Aviv and to the Australian Embassy in Washington.

(L.R. McIntyre)

Senior External Affairs Representative.

SECRET

S.4/4/1:

Memo No. 684.

3rd November 1955.

CONFIDENTIAL.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

EGYPTIAN/SAUDI ARABIAN PACT.

I refer to our Memo No. 672 of the 27th October concerning the signing of a military pact between Syria and Egypt, and the announcement that a similar pact would be signed between Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

2. Emir Feisal, Crown Prince, Premier and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia and the Egyptian Prime Minister, signed the Egyptian/Saudi Arabian Pact on the 27th October. The terms of the Treaty are the same as those of the Syrian/Egyptian Pact, a copy of which was attached to our memo under reference, with the following exceptions:

- (a) Article 3 of the Saudi Arabian Treaty omits the words "the security of the Arab Area in the Middle East".
- (b) Article 7 of the Saudi Arabian Treaty omits Article 7(d).
- (c) Article 9 of the Saudi Arabian Treaty omits 9(a) and (b) and reads:

"The two Contracting Parties will place at the disposal of the Joint Command, in peace and war time, such forces as may be deemed necessary by the War Council in agreement with the Commander-in-Chief. This shall be done with the approval of the Supreme Council".

- (d) Article 10 of the Saudi Arabian Treaty reads only:

"Each of the two Contracting Countries shall pay the salaries and remunerations of the Military and Civilian Personnel attached to the Joint Command, the War Council and other Committees in accordance with its own financial regulations."

- (e) Article 13 of the Egyptian Syrian Pact, relating to the Treaty being approved in conformity with the Constitutional Rules in force in each of the two countries, is omitted in the Saudi Arabian Pact for the obvious reason that Saudi Arabia has no constitutional rules.

- (f) This Treaty has a term of five years, automatically renewable for further terms of five years, as has the Egyptian/Syrian Pact, and not ten as previously reported.

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3. According to the Press, negotiations still continue between Lebanon and Syria on the subject of a Military Pact, although we understand both President Shamoun and the Lebanese Commander-in-Chief, General Shehab, are opposed to it, while the Prime Minister Karamah is active in its support. There have been further developments along similar lines between other Arab countries. A joint communique issued in Aman on the 31st October, following talks between the Syrian Prime Minister, Said El Ghazzy, and the Jordanian Prime Minister, Said El Mufly, stated that "the policy of Syria and Jordan is based on the consideration of the truce line as one Arab defence line and any attack on any part of it would be considered as an attack on other parts. The Syrian and Jordanian States have, therefore, studied practical steps to realise this policy and there was full agreement between their points of view". This communique has been widely interpreted as meaning that Syria and Jordan have agreed in principle to the establishment of a Joint Command over the Syrian Armed Forces on the Israeli frontier and the Jordanian National Guard, as distinct from the Arab Legion.

4. An interesting development is Iraq's reaction to this series of Egyptian-sponsored bilateral pacts. On October 30th, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Burhanuddin Hashayan, summoned the Lebanese Ambassador and the Syrian Charge d'Affaires in Baghdad, and is reported to have informed them that Iraq, "after full consideration of the bilateral military pacts between Egypt and Syria and Egypt and Saudi Arabia, would welcome negotiating similar pacts with Syria and Lebanon." The Syrian and Lebanese Prime Ministers are, according to the Press, expected to visit Baghdad in the immediate future to discuss general Arab questions.

5. A copy of this memo is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

(Sgd) H. D. WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

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181/2/4

P.I. BulletinDevelopments in the Arab League

In the last P.I. Bulletin some attempt was made to evaluate U.S.S.R. policy in the Middle East. It was mentioned that the hostility of Egypt, Syria and Saudi-Arabia to the Turco-Iraqi Pact has provided the Soviet with an opportunity to extend its influence in the area and moreover that the U.S.S.R. has been able to take advantage of strong neutralist sentiment in Egypt and Syria. However these advantages have been offset in part by the growth of the Bagdad Pact as a regional defence organization, particularly the accession of Pakistan and Iran. In this article it is proposed to discuss these developments in greater detail.

Egyptian "Neutrality"

2. The roots of Egyptian hostility to the Bagdad Pact are many and complex. Nasser has informed the Western Powers that he cannot support any Western-inspired proposals for the defence of the area in the following terms :

"Since the Arabs believe that the Western Powers (and Turkey because of its NATO association is included among them) will always attempt to dominate them, any sort of defence in the Middle East in which one of the major powers is a partner will end up by being to the disadvantage of us and of the rest of the free world, because the Communists will have an opportunity to stir up hate against such a partnership and this would ruin us, the Arab nations, in a few years."

3. There is some evidence to suggest that this view is more than a mere rationalization, that in fact it springs from a "neutralist" view not dissimilar from that of the Indian Prime Minister. Examination of Nasser's apologia "The Philosophy of the Revolution" and other writings show that Nasser's views closely resemble Nehru's. He believes that the

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existence of the hydrogen bomb makes co-existence essential; and that if the French had withdrawn from Indo-China in 1946, there would be a non-Communist Government there now, on the grounds that a people seeking to put an end to colonial status seek help from whatever quarter is available. Nasser also considers that neutralism of the type favoured by Nehru will help in ending the cold war. He also opposes SEATO in the belief that none of the major powers should be included in such a treaty because to the people of the area their participation is viewed as imperialism, "just colonialism in disguise." As regards Egypt's role in the Middle East, Nasser believes that it is similar to India's in eastern Asia : "... I think Egypt can collect a group around her, and if there is an attack we will ask for help."

Egyptian Pan-Islamic Ambitions

4. A second factor which helps to explain Egyptian antipathy to Iraqi participation in "northern-tier" defence is that since the rise of Arab nationalism during and after the first World War and more especially since the formation of the Arab League, Egypt has been regarded as the leading Arab power. Accordingly it has opposed any attempt, real or imaginary, by other countries, notably Iraq and Pakistan, to threaten its predominant position in the area. This attitude is reinforced by a strong sense of Islamic consciousness which Egypt finds it useful to foster in order to strengthen the tendency of Moslems everywhere to look to its leadership.

Egyptian-Syrian Pact

5. *from the Arab world. To this and it seemed*
Egypt expressed its opposition to the Turco-Iraqi Pact by endeavouring to isolate Iraq early in March 1955, Syrian and Saudi-Arabian agreement to a number of principles regarding non-participation in the Turco-Iraqi and other pacts and the establishment of Arab defence and economic organizations, which it was intended to incorporate in a formal agreement.

6. In the event, despite intensive efforts, Egypt was unable to get Syrian agreement to a multi-lateral agreement. Apparently Syria opposed the proposed Tri-Partite Pact in the belief that it would bind itself to accept decisions by Egypt, *Yemen* Syria and Saudi-Arabia with which it

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was not in agreement. However, Egypt has been successful in negotiating bilateral agreements with Syria and Saudi-Arabia. These were signed in October and Egypt hopes that they will be followed by similar agreements between Syria and Lebanon and Syria and Jordan.

7. The agreements so far signed do not include any specific reference to the Bagdad Pact. However they do establish what can only be regarded as a rival defence organization. For instance Article 3 of the Egyptian-Syrian Pact provides that "the two contracting parties shall, at the request of either, consult with each other whenever serious tensions develop in international relations in a manner affecting the security of the Arab area in the Middle East, or the territorial integrity or independence or security of any or either country." To fulfil this and the other purposes of the Pact it is proposed to establish a Supreme Council, a War Council and a Joint Command. Although exceedingly cumbersome a series of bilateral agreements of this nature does in fact amount to a comprehensive defence organization. Apart from this, in so far as the agreements have a positive purpose and are not designed simply to counter the Bagdad Pact, they are directed against Israel.

Development of the Bagdad Pact.

8. The Turco-Iraqi (or Bagdad) Pact was signed in February 1955 and was drawn up in such a way as to constitute the nucleus of a regional defence organization. The United Kingdom acceded to it in April and in so doing took advantage of one of its provisions to negotiate a new Agreement with Iraq to replace the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of ~~1932~~ 1932. (Article I of the Bagdad Pact provided that the parties in co-operating for their security and defence could negotiate special agreements with each other).

9. On 1st July the then Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Mohammed Ali, announced that Pakistan would accede to the Bagdad Pact. This accession became effective on 23rd September and at the same time it was announced ~~that~~ that the Agreement concluded by Pakistan with Turkey early in 1954 for political, economic and cultural collaboration would be merged with the Bagdad Pact.

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10. On 12th October the Iranian Government formally notified Iraq of its decision to accede to the Bagdad Pact. This action brought forth a strong protest from the U.S.S.R. which alleged that "the accession of Iran to this military alignment is incompatible with the interests of consolidating peace and security in the Middle East" and contradicts the good neighbourly relations between Iran and the Soviet Union and certain treaty obligations of Iran. The Iranian reply to this Note said that Iran's object in joining the Bagdad Pact, which had been concluded within the framework of the United Nations Charter was the consolidating of peace and security in the Middle East. "The purpose of the Pact is protection of peace and legitimate defence. This is within established international principles and basic and natural laws of mankind and society laid down in the provisions of the United Nations Charter."

11. Now that Pakistan and Iran have acceded to the Pact a continuously functioning Middle East defence organization may be established. The Pact provided for the setting-up of a permanent council at ministerial level to draw up concrete plans for the defence of the area. The first meeting of this council will take place during November and the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary has announced that he will attend.

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AFRICA AND MIDDLE EASTSoviet Activity in the Middle East

In countering the Soviet offer of arms to Egypt the United Kingdom intends to strengthen the Bagdad Pact countries (Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan). To this end the British Foreign Secretary will attend the first meeting of the Ministerial Council to be established under the Pact. The United Kingdom is speeding up the supply of military equipment to Iraq and the United States is examining the possibility of aiding Iran.

The Western Foreign Ministers were reluctant to grant Israel a security guarantee against the possibility of Arab aggression. However, official details of their decision are not available nor of the outcome of the Israel Prime Minister's conversations with the four Foreign Ministers. However Harry reports that the French delegation to the Geneva talks says that Israel would not object to modest arms deliveries by West to Syria if it would prevent Syrian agreement with Soviet bloc.

The latest Soviet action in concluding a Treaty with Yemen is a further indication of the former's determined intrusion into Middle East affairs. United Kingdom - Yemeni relations are bad and presumably the U.S.S.R. will use its influence to prevent their getting better. (Saving. 183 from London press)

Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian Relations

Egypt has followed up its mutual security agreement with Syria by concluding a similar agreement with Saudi-Arabia. These agreements are directed against Israel and also by implication against Iraq and the Bagdad Pact. They take the place of the proposed Tri-Partite Pact which Egypt endeavoured to negotiate with the same countries in order to isolate Iraq and counteract the Bagdad Pact's influence with other Arab League countries.

SECRET

12/5/3.

Memo No. 672.

27th October 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN PACT.

.... I refer to our Memo No. 661 of the 20th October 1955, reporting the conclusion of a military pact between Syria and Egypt. The Pact was signed on the 20th October and we enclose a translation of the text as published in Cairo in "Al-Gumhuria" on the 24th October, which we understand is the full and official text.

2. The Pact differs little in substance from the proposed Tripartite Pact which has now been discarded in favour of a series of bilateral pacts of which this is the first. It was announced on 26th October that Egypt and Saudi Arabia are about to sign a similar pact and, as we mentioned in our Memo under reference, it is reported that Lebanon and Syria will also enter into the same type of agreement.

3. The reason for the substitution of these Pacts for the Tripartite Pact appears to have been Syrian objections to the supra national aspects of the latter - in particular Syria was not anxious to be forced by the Egyptians and Saudi-Arabians to accept, for instance, a Yemen decision. The timing of the Pact, on the other hand, is probably connected with fears of an Israeli attack following the Egyptian arms deal.

4. It is difficult to see the material gains claimed by the Cairo Press for the Agreement, in view of the existence of the Arab Collective Security Pact. That the latter has remained a dead letter does not change the fact of its existence and there is little reason to believe that the new series of pacts will be any more effective. One interesting complication in the event of this series of bilateral pacts being signed will be the question of co-ordination between the Commanders-in-Chief of the several joint armies.

5. "Al-Gumhuria" announced the Saudi Arabian/Egyptian Pact with the following comment which is indicative of the emotional way in which such acts of the regime are treated by the semi-official paper and largely aped by other Cairo papers:

"Today will be signed a Military Agreement between Egypt and Saudi Arabia - a few days after the conclusion of the Egyptian-Syrian Military Pact.

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This is great news which will undoubtedly delight the hearts and souls of free men in all Arab countries as much as it will shake the foundations of Zionism and frighten the Imperialist circles."

Article 6: The two contracting countries consider any attack on the territory or persons of one of them as an act of aggression. In order to ensure their own defence, they undertake to extend speedy assistance to the attacked country and to take immediately all measures and use all means at their disposal, including armed force, to repel the attack and restore security and peace.

In accordance with Article 6 of the Arab League Charter and Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the League Council and the Security Council shall be informed of the attack and the measures taken to repel it.

(Sgd) H. D. WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)

Charge d'Affaires a.i.

The two contracting countries pledge that neither of them shall conclude a unilateral peace settlement or any kind of agreement with the aggressor without the consent of the other country.

Article 7: The two contracting countries shall, at the request of either, consult with each other whenever serious tensions develop in international relations in a manner affecting the security of the Arab area in the Middle East, or the territorial integrity or independence or security of any of either country. In the event of an imminent threat of war or a sudden international emergency of a menacing nature, the two contracting countries shall immediately take the preventive and defensive measures required by the situation.

Article 8: In the event of a sudden attack on the borders or the persons of either of the contracting countries, they shall immediately determine the measures falling within the provisions of this agreement into effect in addition to the military measures taken to meet such an attack.

Article 9: For the fulfilment of the purposes of this agreement, the two contracting countries have agreed to establish the following organisational machinery: a Supreme Council, a War Council and a Joint Command.

Article 10:

(a) The Supreme Council shall be composed of the Foreign and War Ministers of the two contracting countries.

(b) It shall be the official authority from which the Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Command shall receive all directives relating to military policy. It shall have the power to appoint or dismiss the Commander-in-Chief.

(c) At the invitation of the War Council, it shall organise the Joint Command, define its terms of reference and its duties and make any amendments therein upon the recommendation of the War Council. The Supreme Council shall have the right to set up any committees, or subsidiary or provisional councils, whenever such a step is deemed necessary.

TEXT OF EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN PACT

Article 1: The two contracting countries affirm their keen desire for lasting security and peace and their determination to settle all their international differences by peaceful methods.

Article 2: The two contracting countries consider any armed attack on the territory or forces of one of them as an attack on them both. Consequently, and in exercise of the right of individual and collective self-defence, they undertake to extend speedy assistance to the attacked country and to take immediately all measures and use all means at their disposal, including armed force, to repel the attack and restore security and peace.

In accordance with Article 6 of the Arab League Charter and Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the League Council and the Security Council shall be immediately informed of the attack and the measures taken to deal with it.

The two contracting countries pledge that neither of them shall conclude a unilateral peace settlement or any kind of agreement with the aggressor without the consent of the other country.

Article 3: The two contracting countries shall, at the request of either, consult with each other whenever serious tensions develop in international relations in a manner affecting the security of the Arab area in the Middle East, or the territorial integrity or independence or security of any of either country. In the event of an imminent threat of war or a sudden international emergency of a menacing nature, the two contracting countries shall immediately take the preventive and defensive measures required by the situation.

Article 4: In the event of a sudden attack on the borders or the forces of either of the contracting countries, they shall immediately determine the measures putting the provisions of this agreement into effect in addition to the military measures taken to meet such an attack.

Article 5: For the fulfilment of the purposes of this agreement, the two contracting countries have agreed to establish the following organizational machinery: a Supreme Council, a War Council and a Joint Command.

Article 6:

(a) The Supreme Council shall be composed of the Foreign and War Ministers of the two contracting countries.

(b) It shall be the official authority from which the Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Command shall receive all directives relating to military policy. It shall have the power to appoint or dismiss the Commander-in-Chief.

(c) At the invitation of the War Council, it shall organize the Joint Command, define its terms of reference and its duties and make any amendments therein upon the recommendation of the War Council. The Supreme Council shall have the right to set up any committees, or subsidiary or provisional councils, whenever such a step is deemed necessary.

(d) The Council shall be empowered to examine the recommendations and decisions of the War Council on matters outside the jurisdiction of the Chiefs of Staff.

(e) The Council shall issue rules of procedure for its meetings and for the functions of the War Council.

Article 7:

(a) The War Council shall be composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the two contracting countries.

(b) It shall serve as the Supreme Council's Advisory Body. It shall submit recommendations and directives in connection with military planning and all the duties assigned to the Joint Command.

(c) The War Council shall make recommendations on war industries and on communications facilities required for military purposes, including their coordination for the benefit of the Armed Forces in the two contracting countries.

(d) It shall prepare statistical and other data on the military, natural, industrial, agricultural and other resources and potentialities of the two contracting countries and on everything relating to their joint war effort. It shall submit to the Supreme Council proposals for the exploitation of these resources and potentialities for the benefit of the war effort.

(e) The War Council shall study the programmes drawn up by the Joint Command for training, organizing, arming and equipping the forces at its disposal. It shall also study the possibilities of applying them to the armies of the two contracting powers and shall take the necessary steps to carry them out. It shall submit its findings to the Supreme Council for endorsement.

(f) This Council shall have a permanent military body to make all preparatory studies on the questions coming up before it. The Council shall organize the functions of this body by drawing up procedural rules for this purpose. It shall also draw up its budget.

Article 8:

(1) The Joint Command shall consist of: The Commander-in-Chief, The General Staff, the units detached for the security of the Joint Command and the conduct of its activities.

This Command shall be permanent, functioning in peace-time and war-time.

(2) The Commander-in-Chief shall command the forces put at his disposal. He shall be responsible to the Supreme Council. His duties shall be:

(a) to draw up and implement the programmes for training, organising, arming and equipping the forces placed at his disposal by the two contracting countries so that they may become a dependable unified force; and to submit these programmes to the War Council for examination or to the Supreme Council for endorsement.

(b) to prepare and carry out joint defence plans to meet

all eventualities arising from any possible armed attack on one of the two countries or on their forces. For the preparation of these plans, he shall rely on the decisions and directives of the Supreme Council.

(c) to deploy the forces put at his disposal by the two contracting countries in peace-time and war-time in accordance with joint defence plans.

(d) to draw up the budget of the Joint Command and to submit it to the War Council for consideration prior to final endorsement by the Supreme Council.

(3) The appointment or dismissal of the Chief Aides of the Commander-in-Chief shall be undertaken by the War Council in agreement with the Commander-in-Chief. As for the rest of the Command Staff, appointments and dismissals shall be undertaken by the Commander-in-Chief in agreement with the Chief of Staff of the Army concerned.

Article 9:

(1) The two contracting parties will place at the disposal of the Joint Command, in peace and war time, all striking units including the troops concentrated on the Palestinian borders. The War Council, in conjunction with the Commander-in-Chief, will fix the number of troops to be entrusted with each of the two tasks, the recommendations of the Council to be considered as final immediately on being approved by the Supreme Council.

(2) The War Council, on the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief, shall make a precise list of the installations and bases necessary for the carrying out of plans and will be decided on priority.

Article 10:

(1) A joint fund in which the two contracting parties will participate, shall be established for the achievement of the following objectives:

(a) All expenditure incurred by the Joint Command shall be equally shared by the two contracting parties.

(b) With regard to the expenses for the maintenance of military installations mentioned in Article 9, paragraph 2, they shall be borne in the proportion of 65% by the Egyptian Republic and 35% by the Syrian Republic.

(2) Each of the two contracting states shall pay all salaries and indemnities for the military and civil personnel to be seconded for duty by it with the Joint Command, the War Council and other Committees in conformity with the financial regulations of each of them.

Article 11: None of the provisions of this pact shall in any way affect or be intended to affect the rights and obligations resulting or which may result therefrom or which may accrue in conformity with the provisions of the United Nations Charter or with the responsibilities borne by the United Nations Security Council for the maintenance of world peace and security.

Term of Treaty.

Article 12: This treaty shall be for a term of 10 years

automatically renewable for further terms of 5 years. Each of the two contracting parties may terminate the pact by notifying the other party at least one year before the expiry of any of the above terms.

Article 13: This treaty shall be approved in conformity with the constitutional rules in force in each of the two countries, the instruments of ratification to be exchanged at the Syrian Foreign Ministry in Damascus within a period not exceeding 30 days from the date of the signing of the pact which will come into force immediately on the exchange of these documents.

CONFIDENTIAL

13/5/1.

Memo No. 658.

20th October 1955.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

THE LEBANON

1. According to a despatch from the General Manager of the Arab News Agency in Beirut, Camille Shamoun, the Lebanese President, has warned America that she would be unable to stem the leftist trend which was getting stronger in Arab policy as a result of Egypt's purchase of arms from Czechoslovakia, unless the U.S. Government changed its policy towards the Arabs. The despatch claimed that the President told Mr. George Allen, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, that the factors which prompted Egypt to take her decision were fully appreciated in the Lebanon and that while the Lebanon would not conclude similar arms deals, the situation was fraught with danger. The President is further alleged to have explained to Mr. Allen that the three weakest points in U.S. policy in the Middle East were: (i) America's political support for Israel; (ii) the big difference between aid granted to the Arabs and to Israel and (iii) the reluctance of the American Government to overcome the internal political factors which induced it to support Israel - a fact which convinced the Arabs that the American policy would never change.

2. This public attitude of Shamoun's contrasts with a recent conversation he held with the British Ambassador in Beirut. In this he expressed his alarm at Egypt's action and in general took a pro-Western line towards recent developments. He also made clear his antagonism to the present Prime Minister - Karamah, whom he alleged was espousing Moslem causes which might upset the Lebanon's delicate political balance. He was certain that Karamah would not last long as Prime Minister.

3. The difference in public and private attitudes adopted by Middle Eastern leaders has always been a factor in this area and no where more so than in the Lebanon. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Shamoun is entirely pro-Western by conviction and that he is forced to make public criticism of the West in order to maintain his weakening political position.

(Sgd) H. D. WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)

Charge d'Affaires a.i.

Memo No. 18

Australian Embassy,
Washington.

For information.

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12/5/3.

Memo No. 661.

20th October 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

SYRIAN/EGYPTIAN MILITARY PACT.

According to press reports on the 18th October 1955, the Syrian Government approved the draft of a bilateral military treaty with Egypt. The treaty is expected to be signed shortly.

2. It is understood that the treaty will consist of a pledge by both sides to exchange military aid as quickly as possible in the event of any aggression against either country. Other provisions are believed to be the creation of a joint command between the two countries in time of war or peace for the organisation of their military power; the establishment of a joint fund to finance military plans, with Egypt contributing 65% and Syria 35% of the fund; and the establishment of a Supreme Defence Ministry of the two countries.

3. In a press interview President Kumatly of Syria said there was nothing in the proposed pact between Egypt and Syria which would ~~disturb~~ relations between Arab League member States. He expressed the hope that the improvement in Arab relations, as reflected during the recent Arab League meetings in Cairo, would increase. The President declined to comment on the reports that the U.S.S.R. has offered arms and economic aid to Syria. He remarked, however, that the Egyptian Prime Minister, Nasser, had not accepted any deal with political strings attached.

4. On 19th October, the Lebanese Foreign Minister announced that a bilateral military pact, on the same lines as the proposed pact between Syria and Egypt, would be concluded shortly between Syria and the Lebanon. Such a pact had the support of Egypt, he added.

5. A copy of this Memo is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

(H.D. WHITE)
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

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Memo No.606

29th September, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

CONFIDENTIAL

NEW SYRIAN GOVERNMENT

I refer to our Memo No.569 of the 15th September concerning the new Syrian Government formed by Said El Ghazzy.

2. We have now seen a despatch from the British Embassy in Damascus discussing various aspects of the new Syrian Government and the following comments may be of interest to you. The President originally asked Ghazzy to form an "all party" coalition, which alienated the right wing parties who had been responsible for Kuwatly's election. Ghazzy failed in this first attempt and was then charged with forming a more limited coalition, relying primarily on the right wing groups. By then, however, it was too late - the chronic rivalries between the Nationalists and Populists had come to the fore during the hard political bargaining and the Populist's claimed their reward for not putting forward a rival candidate to Kuwatly. As a result of this, the Nationalists refused to participate and have joined the Ba'th Socialists in opposition while the Democratic Bloc, breaking their alliance with the Ba'th Socialists, were brought into the Cabinet to give it a comfortable majority in the Chamber.
3. The new Government although an improvement on its predecessor, is an illogical group of parties which is likely to perpetuate the instability which has characterised Syrian political life since the fall of Shishakly in February 1954. Ghazzy himself has a reputation for integrity and impartiality and his Government which supervised the elections of September 1954, emerged well from that ordeal. Nevertheless, he is not a forceful character and lacks a personal following in the Chamber. He may, therefore, not be able to control his heterogeneous team with a strong hand or impose his own moderate ideas on his Cabinet colleagues.
4. In these circumstances it is not surprising that a long delay took place while the Government's policy statement was being prepared. This was read to the Chamber on the 22nd September and represents a carefully balanced compromise. It is mainly interesting for its treatment of the four major issues currently facing Syria; the Dulles statement, the Johnston plan, the Tripartite Pact and negotiations with the Iraq Petroleum Company. As a concession to the left there was the usual denunciation of Israel and a blunt refusal to take part in any peace negotiations. It is difficult to say how much such a statement, which is expected of all new Governments, commits it to a hostile attitude towards Mr. Dulles' statement. The Embassy suggests that it need not be taken too seriously and is of the opinion that Syria's attitude will depend on Iraq's and Egypt's.
5. The policy statement made it clear that negotiations on the Tripartite Pact are to continue but that it is to be open to all Arab states, although the obligations which some of them have entered into with non-Arab states will not bind the others. This statement shows the strong influence of the Populists who are, in the main, pro-Iraq and pro-Western, and who would like to see the Tripartite Pact converted into an instrument for strengthening the Collective Security Pact rather than an alliance against the Turco-Iraqi Pact.

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6. By a very brief and factual reference to the negotiations currently being conducted with the I.P.C., the Government has succeeded in removing this issue somewhat from the pressure of public opinion, which has been bedevilling the discussions which, as usual, centre around the Syrian demand for more transit dues on I.P.C. oil.

7. The statement made no reference to the Johnston Plan. This may possibly be due to the fact that it has now been announced that the plan will be discussed by the Arab Foreign Ministers at a conference to be held early next month. This conference will take the place of the one previously arranged for September.

(Sgd) H. D. WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

CONFIDENTIAL

Name of Paper *The Times*
 Published at *London*

File No. *181/2/4*
 Date *10th October 1955*

ARAB RELATIONS WITH WEST

SIGNIFICANCE OF CAIRO TALKS

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

CAIRO, Oct. 9

The political committee of the Arab League, consisting of the Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers of member States, met to-day in Cairo for discussions which may have a profound bearing on Arab relations with the west. Most of the matters that now concern both Arabs and the west are to be discussed; and on many of them it may be expected that the final decision will express the present mood of resentment and dismissal, amounting almost to contempt, of the western Powers.

Iraq will be represented, but the foundations of the Iraq-Turkey pact, a bastion of the west in these parts, will no doubt be undermined by the triumphant success of Colonel Nasser's arms policy. Egypt's position as leader of the League has been boldly re-established, and her voice will be heard with more respect than ever.

JORDAN WATERS PLAN

The conference was originally called to discuss two issues—the Johnston plan for exploitation of the Jordan waters and Mr. Dulles's proposals for the easing of tension in the Middle East. But Colonel Nasser's agreement with Czechoslovakia has been signed since this agenda was arranged, and is likely to colour the thoughts of every delegate on nearly every issue. In regard to the Johnston plan, for example, delegates may well wonder whether funds from behind the iron curtain may not be forthcoming for a scheme which would require no cooperation with Israel.

Mr. Johnston's original scheme has been so drastically modified in the course of the months to meet the demands of the Arab countries that it is now said to represent to the extent of 95 per cent. a rival plan produced by Arab engineers; but it still envisages the storage of some "Arab water" in Lake Tiberias, which is wholly in Israel, and therefore requires some degree of cooperation with the Israel Government. There have been reports recently that the Arabs, having achieved such drastic changes, were preparing to accept the plan, but to-day Selim Lahoud, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, said: "Lebanon is not prepared to accept any scheme which even by implication means recognition of Israel as a state."

American funds are behind the concept of the Johnston plan, together with the skill of American and British irrigation engineers. It is conceivable that the delegates may wonder whether Russian funds would do as well. It is only a remote possibility, and Jordan, the Power most closely concerned, is unlikely to consider it; but in the present climate of Arab thought it may cross a mind or two. Not half so remote, and therefore twice as serious, is the possibility that Russian funds may be obtained for construction of the high dam at Aswan, the very symbol of the new Egypt.

DEFENCE PACT PLAN

Then there is the question of Arab military unity, shattered by the signing of the Iraq-Turkey pact and by the pique with which Egypt greeted that development.

Now the Lebanese and Syrians have produced a joint plan for a new all-Arab defence pact. This was discussed to-day by the Egyptian and Syrian military commanders, and will be submitted to Colonel Nasser before discussion by the committee. It may provide for an alliance rearmed from Russian sources. Syria and Lebanon have both been flirting with the idea of arms from behind the iron curtain—Selim Lahoud said to-day that his Government would seriously consider an arms agreement with any country, provided that there were no strings attached—and Emir Feisal has made it clear that his country will, if need be, "buy arms from the devil."

AF. ME.

13/5/1

Memo No. 554

7th September 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA A.C.T.

Lebanese Foreign Policy

I refer to our memorandum No. 470 of the 27th July, concerning the policy of the Lebanese Government which was formed on the 9th July. In this memorandum we mentioned that the Foreign Minister, Hamid Frangieh, announced his intention to strengthen the Lebanon's traditional ties of friendship with Syria and with the other Arab States.

2. During August the new Foreign Minister held a series of conversations with the Syrian Government, following which it was announced that steps would be taken to remove some of the minor causes of irritation between the two countries. Frangieh was unable to accomplish a great deal in this direction owing to the approach of the Syrian Presidential elections and the imminent change in the Syrian Government. He thus turned his attention to Egypt and held a series of conversations in Cairo with Gamal Abdel Nasser and other Egyptian leaders.

3. On the 1st September, at the conclusion of Frangieh's six-day visit to Egypt a joint communiqué was issued announcing that Egypt and the Lebanon had agreed to "consult and exchange information" on all matters relating to foreign policy, defence and public security. The communiqué added that during the Cairo meetings it had been agreed to suggest to all Arab countries that they work towards similar ends, either with Egypt and the Lebanon or between themselves. Both Egypt and the Lebanon would be able to act in their mutual interest in the international field.

4. The press has indulged in considerable speculation as to whether these moves of Frangieh will place the Lebanon more firmly in the Syrian/Egyptian/Saudi Arabian camp. It may not, however, mean more than a further attempt by the Lebanon to placate both sides of the fence in the current division in the Arab world, particularly after the Saudi Arabian pressure, reported in our memorandum No. 337 of 19th May.

→ 181/2/4

orig on 12/1

12/9

(H.D. WHITE)
First Secretary.

181/2/4
SAVINGRAM CONFIDENTIAL

:EGM:

I. 11402

Dated: 2nd September 1955

1445

FROM:

Rec'd: 8th September 1955
0830Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.Saving 228. CONFIDENTIAL.

Information copies Cairo, Tel Aviv.

The Middle East, Egypt and Israel (our 969).

Following is summary of comments of Burdett,
Egyptian Desk, on 1st September.

2. Having failed to prevent the present outbreak of fighting, the United States takes the view it cannot usefully intervene further at this stage; Egypt and Israel have brought the situation on themselves and will have to work their way out of it. (Burdett seemed to have a strong "wash our hand of this affair" attitude which we found surprising).

3. United States does not expect fighting to develop into a "second round," since Egypt has not the military capacity and Israel has nothing to gain by advancing. Burdett thinks clashes may last for several days leading to an eventual "cease fire". It is not yet known whether the Security Council will intervene but United States has no present intention of bringing the matter up (though press says Burns will).

4. Even though a general Egypt-Israel war is not expected, outbreak is far more serious than the usual "incidents". The effect on Arab-Israel relations and the whole Middle East situation is likely to be very bad, leaving an added legacy of bitterness and setting back rapprochement considerably. The result is particularly disappointing after efforts of United States and Burns to bring about a settlement. Furthermore, the Johnston Plan, which has already been in serious difficulty, will certainly suffer.

5. The effect on Dulles proposals cannot be judged in the same way. Dulles' statement was more declaration of United States policy for long term than an immediate plan for settlement and it will remain as a basis for settlement despite immediate set-backs.

6. Soviet activity - Burdett confirmed that United States had received reports of Soviet offers of arms to Arab States (mentioned by Dulles in a press conference of 30th August), particularly to Egypt (in exchange for cotton). However, although Egypt was anxious to get arms wherever it could (and also to sell its cotton), there was no indication that any actual delivery of arms is imminent. The Egyptians are likely to stick to their "independent" line, despite Soviet overtures and will also be reluctant to create a logistic problem by adding Russian weapons to present mainly British equipment. Soviet activity in the Middle East generally has increased in the last few months with most emphasis, so far, on

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SAVINGRAM

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I. 11402

trade and cultural relations.

7. The position of the Army regime in Egypt has, undoubtedly, been weakened by failure of Sudan policy and by Gaza troubles. This could, unfortunately, induce Nasser to increase his hostile attitude to Israel; in fact, it may already have been responsible for some of Egypt's recent truculence. Egyptians have softened somewhat on Turkey-Iraq Pact and have not recently been pushing Egypt-Daudi-Arabia Pact. This is now in a dead stage, but has the habit of reviving quite suddenly.

8. Generally, Burdett gave the impression that United States considers the Middle East situation has deteriorated quite seriously in recent weeks. But that United States does not foresee any immediate threat to the area beyond frustration of plans for Arab-Israeli reconciliation.

A/MIN. & DEPT: E.A.
P.M.'s

9th September, 1955.

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper... *The Sunday Times*

File No... *181/2/4*

Published at... *London*

Date... *11th July 1958*

~~REF. 1172~~
**BRITISH CRITICISM OF
ARAB PACT**

**REASONS GIVEN TO SYRIAN
MINISTER**

FROM OUR DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Mr. Khalid el Azam, the Syrian Foreign Minister, has left London by air for Damascus after paying a short visit to Britain on his way home from San Francisco.

On Thursday he called on Mr. Macmillan, who, it is understood, explained to him, among other things, Britain's reasons for being critical of the proposed pact between Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. The pact would run counter to the Turkey-Iraq pact, which Britain has joined and Pakistan intends to join, because members of the Egypt-Syria-Saudi Arabia pact would be barred from taking part in other alliances.

If the pact between Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia were concluded, Iraq would be excluded from joining because of her membership of the Turkey-Iraq pact. The proposed pact would, therefore, perpetuate the present division between the Arab countries and make harder the establishment of a single Middle East defence system.

The present Government in Syria has so far, however, been inclined towards the pact and opposed to join the existing Turkey-Iraq pact. Egypt and Saudi Arabia are able to bring much influence to bear upon some of the Syrian leaders, but a possibly more important point is that the proposed pact would establish a unified Arab command with a headquarters, it is proposed, in Damascus. This is naturally attractive to a section of Syrian army leaders. The command would entail a number of senior appointments to be shared between the three member States, which means in practice that the prospects for some senior officers in the Syrian Army would be greatly improved.



RESTRICTED

22 AUG 1955

CANBERRA

181/2/4

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

Memo No. 504

Box 273

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION.
CAIRO.

16th August, 1955.

RESTRICTED

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

TRIPARTITE PACT

I refer to our Memorandum No. 415 of 29th June, and previous correspondence on the likelihood of the signing of the Tripartite Pact.

2. The general uncertainty as to whether the Pact will be signed continues, although there are still occasional references in the Egyptian press to the imminence of this event. Nevertheless, there have been some significant straws in the wind, and of these possibly a recent remark of Nassar's is the most revealing. Nassar is believed to have told Emile Bustany, the Lebanese Deputy and businessman recently in Cairo on a visit, that the proposed Pact was dead.

3. While it appears that Saudi Arabia continues its pressure for the conclusion of the Agreement, the Syrians have apparently returned to a more cool attitude. After a joint meeting of the Lebanese and Syrian Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committees on 7th August, Rashad Jabri, a prominent Populist member of the Syrian Foreign Affairs Committee, told the press that a majority of the members of both Committees were agreed on the impossibility of concluding the Tripartite Pact. To do so would be harmful to the common interests of the Arab States, and this fact was now realised, he said, even by those members of the Syrian Committee who had at the outset been most convinced of the value of the Tripartite Pact. He added that both the Committees agreed that it was not in the interests of either country to adhere to the Turco-Iraqi Pact.

(H.D. WHITE)

First Secretary

Mr. Kerr 24/8 - This is a welcome lead
Copy on 181/1/3 J 24/8

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Foreign Office and Whitehall Distribution

VY 1051/12

SYRIA
July 7, 1955
Section 1CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE
SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ON JULY 7, 1955*Mr. Macmillan to Mr. Gallagher (Damascus)*

(No. 80. Confidential)

Foreign Office,

Sir,

July 7, 1955.

The Syrian Foreign Minister, accompanied by M. Daoudy, the Syrian Chargé d'Affaires, called on me this afternoon. He had previously been entertained to luncheon by the Minister of State.

2. After the usual courtesies, I raised the question of the Egyptian/Syrian/Saudi Pact with him and urged him to think very deeply before committing himself to such a proposition, which really did little to build up strength in the Middle East and which had originally come into being as a gesture against Iraq. I pointed out that it was quite untrue that we had brought pressure to bear on Syria to join the Turco-Iraqi Pact, but that we certainly deprecated any action taken to promote the Egyptian/Syrian Pact.

3. M. Khalid al Azm replied that the Pact was in no way directed against Iraq. Although he himself did not see eye to eye with the Iraqi Government, Iraq was a country as dear to him as his own. We for our part felt that the threat to the Middle East came from Russia. The Arabs did not feel this—the threat for them was from Israel. Syria felt that she was not sufficiently protected against Israel and that was the only reason why she would like the Egyptian/Syrian/Saudi Pact to come about. There was no reason why Iraq should not join it herself later on when her relations with Egypt had improved. The Arab League Pact was deficient in many ways and something new along the lines of the Egyptian/Syrian/Saudi Pact was necessary. I replied that, however this might be, the signature of the Pact would be construed in the Middle East as an action against Iraq. It was interesting to note that the Communists in the Middle East who condemned the Turco-Iraqi Pact were in favour of the Egyptian/Syrian Pact. What we would like to see would be a comprehensive system of defence in the area in the interests of all the countries concerned. I sincerely hoped that Syria would not commit herself to a step which would prejudice her ultimate co-operation with such a system.

4. Khalid al Azm seemed to misunderstand my point and launched into an explanation of how Syria was by no means a Communist or a Communist-sympathising country. The Russians had adopted on many occasions a more friendly attitude towards the Arabs than had the West. It was only natural that the Arabs should take this into account. The Western Powers, by their support for Israel, were prejudicing Arab goodwill. Israel continued to flout the United Nations, yet we still supported her. What he asked for was impartiality, but it seemed that the Americans, the French and we were more partial to Israel than to the Arabs. I caught him up on this and pointed out that it was largely due to the British in the First World War that the Arab States had achieved their independence. The Arabs ought to remember this. As far as Israel was concerned, if M. Khalid al Azm was sitting in my chair he would know how I had to listen to the same sort of complaints of partiality from the Israeli Ambassador. With regard to the United Nations, we were only one of sixty members, so why should we be to blame if United Nations resolutions were not carried out.

5. I noticed that the situation on the Syrian frontier was much more satisfactory than on, say, the Egyptian frontier. I hoped this situation would continue and improve. It was in the interests of all concerned that one day some sort of settlement should be reached. Our policy in the Middle East was easy to define but difficult to carry out. We wanted the unity and well-being of the

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area and an effective defence system between all its States to resist aggression. The Syrians need not fear the Iraqis, who had made it plain that they respected Syrian independence.

6. Khalid al Azm repeated once more that the Egyptian/Syrian Pact was not directed against Iraq. It was a necessary step by the Arabs to protect themselves against Israel. At the prompting of the Chargé d'Affaires, he then asked if we would look into the question of spare parts, over which the Syrian Military Attaché was having some difficulty with the supplying firm. I suggested that this could be taken up usefully with the Department concerned.

7. I ended by saying that I hoped His Excellency had not minded me speaking frankly to him about our point of view, to which he replied that he was glad to have had this talk and trusted that I, for my part, did not mind his speaking equally frankly.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Ankara, Bagdad, Beirut, B.M.E.O., Cairo, Jedda, Paris and Washington.

I am, &c.

HAROLD MACMILLAN.

12/13-52 200-10

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper..... ~~SECRET~~ File No. 181/2/4
Published at..... Date 15 July 1955

SYRIA'S RELATIONS WITH EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA

The Proposed Tripartite Pact

According to an ANA dispatch of 8th July, Sabri al-Asali said the Syrian Government was anxious to sign the Arab tripartite pact as soon as possible. On 11th July the Syrian Premier said that the current talks towards the pact had made considerable progress; he denied reports that he would leave for Cairo shortly. On 12th July Beirut reported that Khalid al-Azm, asked whether Syria had changed her attitude towards alliances with the West or towards the Arab tripartite pact, replied that there had been no change in Syrian foreign policy, that he considered the outbreak of a new war unlikely, and that alliances were therefore entirely unnecessary. (Beirut 05.00, 12.7.55)

Beirut said on 12th July that, according to Cairo sources, the pact would be signed on 22nd July.

'Al-Akhbar', commenting on the coming Presidential election in Syria, said that of the several conflicting currents in Syrian politics, one of these rejected military alliances with the West and supported the new Arab pact; another advocated the Fertile Crescent project for merging Syria, Iraq and Jordan and joining the Turkish-Iraqi pact; a third was against joining the Arab family on the ground that Syria and the Lebanon were Phoenician in origin and not Arab. (Cairo 05.15, 10.7.55) AF-ME

The Egyptian home service reported a demonstration in Damascus carried out by 'ulema, professional people and various organisations for the purpose of demanding that the signature of the tripartite pact should be expedited (Cairo 05.45, 9.7.55). The Syrian 'Al-Tali'a' was quoted by Cairo's 'Voice of the Arabs' on 9th July for an article saying that "Syria is the target" was the motto of the imperialists, who were using corruption, assassination and allegations that the Syrian economy was collapsing, as well as financing propaganda for alliances with imperialism, in attempts to prevent Syria from signing the Arab tripartite pact.

The "Voice of the Arabs" also referred to the tripartite pact in reports of Fakhir al-Kayyali's talks in Egypt and Saudi Arabia (below), and attributed to al-Kayyali, on his return to Damascus, a statement that agreement on the Arab pact was now complete (9.7.55). In the course of a talk on "Arab economy in the light of the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi economic talks" (see next section) it said that the trend indicated by these talks was consistent with the Arab tripartite pact.

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25th July, 1955.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST DEFENCE

MR. KEVIN

POSITION OF PAKISTAN

The accession of Pakistan to the Turco-Iraqi Pact probably represents, on balance, a positive contribution to the development of a regional organisation capable of defending the Middle East.

2. The United States had intended that regional defence should be organized around the Turco-Pakistani Friendly Co-operation Agreement, concluded early in 1954. However, for a variety of reasons, especially the attitude of Iraq, the more recently concluded Turco-Iraqi Pact has become the accepted vehicle for northern tier defence. This is advantageous because of the two agreements, the Turco-Iraqi Pact is the more binding in its obligations. The Turco-Pakistani Agreement is only the nucleus of a military alliance. Its crux lies in Article 4 which provides, inter alia, for "studies and determination of the ways and extent of co-operation which might be effected" in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, should an unprovoked attack occur against them (i.e. the parties) from outside". On the other hand, the Turco-Iraqi Pact provides positively that the parties will co-operate for their security and defence. Thus, in a formal sense, Pakistan is bound more firmly than previously to contribute to Middle East defence.

3. The Turco-Iraqi Pact also elaborates the machinery by which collaboration in defence is to be pursued. As part of this machinery the Pact envisages the setting-up of a permanent council at ministerial level to draw up concrete plans, when at least four countries become parties to the Pact. Pakistan is the fourth country to accede and therefore a continuously functioning Middle East defence organization may be established now.

4. The circumstances associated with Pakistan's accession suggest that in the initial stages, at least, its contribution may not be particularly valuable. In the first place the Minister for National Defence, General Ayub, opposed joining, although he later modified his opposition. Secondly, only after discussion with the United States Ambassador, did the Pakistan Prime Minister decide to accede unconditionally. The reservations which it had been intended to make, suggest that its motives for joining, were not free of opportunism.

EFFECT ON ARAB STATES

5. Egypt has opposed the Turco-Iraqi Pact out of a dislike for military alliances as such and because it threatened Egypt's paramount position

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in the Arab League. Pakistan's accession is only likely to confirm Egypt in its attitude. The latter has always been suspicious of pan-Islamic tendencies in Pakistani policy. If, as seems likely, Egyptian "neutralism" is Indian inspired, then Egypt will have an additional reason for rejecting any association with the Pact. However, it should be noted that no inspired articles have appeared in the Egyptian press and the Government had made no official comments.

6. Of the other Arab States, Saudi Arabia is bound to follow Egypt. As regards Lebanon, a spokesman for the Lebanese Foreign Ministry is alleged to have said that Lebanon would continue to adopt a neutral attitude towards the Turco-Iraqi Pact and to the proposed Tri-Partite (Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian) Agreement. The Syrian Foreign Minister, Khaled el Azym, when asked whether Syria was still opposed to alliances with the Western powers said that "foreign alliances for Syria are unnecessary because the outbreak of a new war is unlikely". El Azym's hostility to the Turco-Iraqi Pact has probably been strengthened by his recent visit to Paris. The French, for reasons which are not entirely a function of France's special interests, still oppose the Turco-Iraqi Pact.

7. Despite the likelihood that it may lead to a hardening in Egypt's attitude to the Pact, the United Kingdom has welcomed Pakistan's accession. It probably takes the view that since Egypt has agreed to the reactivation of the Suez Canal Base in the event of an attack on Turkey and the Arab States, regional defence can be organized effectively around the Pact without Egyptian participation. This is probably true in the short run, but if Egypt is isolated and her foreign policy develops in a direct adverse to Western interests, then last year's Anglo-Egyptian Agreement may become valueless.

POSITION OF SOUTH AFRICA

8. The position of South Africa in regard to Middle East defence has been clarified by the talks between the South African Minister for Defence, Mr. Erasmus, and United Kingdom Ministers. Mr. Erasmus declared that the policy of his Government was "to contribute forces in order to keep a potential enemy as far as possible from the borders of South Africa, in other words for the defence of Southern Africa, Africa and the Middle East gateways to Africa. While the Union's contribution will depend upon satisfactory arrangements being arrived at between the countries mainly concerned as to the nature and extent of the contribution which each will make, the Union Government is, in the meantime, building up a task force for use outside the Union against further aggression".

9. In a separate secret exchange of letters, Mr. Erasmus agreed to further Staff Talks at which the South African Service Staffs will be authorized to include in their discussions with United Kingdom Service Staffs, matters relating to South Africa's participation in the defence of the Middle East Area. This is on a provisional basis and without commitment.

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST
JCI:JDR

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper Haiky w Pichas Bulletin (No 251) File No. 181/2/4

Published at Sydney N.S.W. (Rec'd by USIS) Date 13th July 1952

SYRIA

DAMASCUS, JULY 12 -- (USIS) -- SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHALED EL-AZM

DECLARES FOREIGN ALLIANCES FOR SYRIA ARE UNNECESSARY BECAUSE HE CONSIDERS THE
OUTBREAK OF A NEW WAR UNLIKELY. HIS COMMENT WAS PROMOTED BY A NEWSMAN'S

QUESTION LAST NIGHT WHETHER SYRIA HAD CHANGED ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD ALLIANCES
WITH THE WEST AND TOWARD THE PROPOSED ARAB TRIPARTITE PACT.

AF, ME

181/2/4



181/2/4

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

5 JUL 1955

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION.
CAIRO.

Memo No. 415

29th June, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

THE TRI-PARTITE PACT.

I refer to our Memorandum No. 385 of the 15th June, concerning the likelihood of signing the proposed Egyptian/Syrian/Saudi-Arabian Agreement.

2. Activity has again quietened with regard to the Pact, partly due perhaps to the absence in San Francisco of the Syrian Foreign Minister, Khaled el-Azm. Before the latter left Syria, he made it clear to the Chamber of Deputies that the Tri-partite Pact would be submitted to the Chamber before signature, and this move will no doubt further slow down the signing as well as taking some of the responsibility from Khaled el-Azm and placing it on the shoulders of the Deputies. For internal reasons, namely the forthcoming Presidential elections, Khaled el-Azm, who is the keenest, if not the most popular, candidate for the office, is making every effort to avoid a show-down with any particular group or party in the hope that he can thus gain wide support. It is for this reason that many observers consider that it is unlikely that Syria will adhere to the Pact until after the Presidential elections in August.

3. While there have been continued Press stories about the imminence of the signing of the Tri-partite Pact, recently there have been fewer public pronouncements. Dr. Fakher el-Kayyaly, the Syrian Economy Minister, is at present in Saudi-Arabia in order to discuss with the Saudis "economic aspects of the Tri-partite Pact", and it may be deduced from this that agreement is still far from being reached on the vexed question of financing the Pact.

4. A copy of this Memorandum is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

H.D. White
(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

Mr. Mc. ...

Copy on 205/2/1

8/7

GR

SAVINGRAM.

SHA.

I.8274.

Dated: 20th June, 1955.

FROM:

Recd.: 30th June, 1955.
1055Australian Embassy,
PARIS.

SAV.10

CONFIDENTIAL

Repeated London Sav.14 and Cairo Sav.4.

Your memorandum 176. Turco-Iraqi Pact.

Maillard, head of Middle Eastern Section of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Deschamps: that French attitude towards the pact was one of reserve. France's aim in the Middle East was to maintain the status quo. It was feared that the pact would:

- (1) destroy the balance of forces and endanger Arab unity, isolating Egypt and influencing her policies in a direction adverse to Western interests;
- (2) further exacerbate relations between Israel and the Arab countries at a time when Israel's relations with some of those countries were showing signs of improvement;
- (3) menace the independence of Syria. The prospect of a Greater Syria under Iraqi leadership is a very real nightmare to the French Government despite assurances France has received on this point.

2. Maillard contends that French fears under points (1) and (2) above have been largely realised.

3. He claims that the recent discussions in Paris with the Syrian Foreign Minister Khaleel El Azem were extremely cordial and constructive and had a satisfactory outcome particularly in their military aspects.

4. There is no doubt from press comment that French policy in the Middle East is related to French difficulties in North Africa but the British Embassy affirms that the French did not at recent talks use the Middle East as a bargaining counter to obtain stronger British support in North Africa.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE
P.M.'s

30th June, 1955.

F 181/2/4

SEC A/Ss LET(DIV 4) MR HOOD UN FAC&AM S&SEA EAF&ME
E AF&ME INF DL C&P
G

181/2/4

MOVES TOWARDS A TRIPARTITE ARAB PACT

On the evening of 24th May Brig. Mahmoud Riyadh, the Egyptian Ambassador in Damascus, handed Khalid al-Azm, the Syrian Foreign Minister, Egypt's reply to Syria's proposals for financing and regulating the common defence fund provided for by the proposed tripartite Arab pact. This and subsequent meetings were reported by ANA but no details of the discussions emerged from broadcast reports. On 30th May, however, Khalid al-Azm was reported to have said that the pact would be signed before he left for San Francisco on 10th June and on 31st May Damascus radio's Hebrew service for Israel reported that Sabri al-Asali, the Syrian Premier, had said that Egypt had approved the proposed Syrian amendments.

On 1st June ANA and Sharq al-Adna reported that Khalid al-Azm had received Abd al-Jalil al-Rawi, the Iraqi Minister in Damascus, and assured him that Syria's object was to unite the Arabs and to avoid any dissension. On the previous evening the Syrian Council of Ministers had reviewed the measures which Syria might take, in view of the Iraqi memorandum presented to Syria at 'Id al-Fitr, to prevent itself from being isolated. According to a Beirut broadcast of 1st June, the Ministers charged Fakhir al-Kayyali, the Minister of National Economy, with the drafting of a comprehensive report on the future of Syria's economy, if Iraq and Turkey should carry out their threat to sever economic relations with Syria soon after the Syrian Government signed the proposed pact. On the same day, according to Sharq al-Adna, Syrian merchants asked the Government to ban the import of cars and of goods producible locally because of "the grave economic crisis".

Later on 1st June Abd al-Jalil al-Rawi, as reported by ANA and Sharq al-Adna, denied that the Iraqi Government had, with Turkey, threatened Syria with an economic boycott. Khalid al-Azm was also said to have denied that the Iraqi memorandum to Syria had contained any implied warning.

Abdullah al-Yafi and Hussein al-Uwaini arrived in Cairo on 30th May "to explain Lebanese policy" (ANA 31.5.55). Cairo radio quoted the former on 1st June as saying that all sections of the Lebanese public supported the proposed Arab pact. That afternoon Al-Yafi saw Gamal Abd al-Nasir and Salah Salim; Salim, reported by Cairo, said Al-Yafi's object was to "find a way out of the situation arising out of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact".

Sheikh Yusuf Yasin told Sharq al-Adna's Cairo correspondent on 27th May that Saudi Arabia had not threatened to impose economic sanctions on the Lebanon. On 1st June ANA reported him as saying that no date for signature of the pact could be assigned before the Amir Faisal came to Cairo "next" week.

Broadcasts in Cairo's "Voice of the Arabs" programme emphasised the concurrence of Egyptian and Syrian views at Khalid al-Azm's meetings with Mahmoud Riyadh but did not go into the subject of Syria's proposed amendments to the tripartite pact or Egypt's reply.

Khalid al-Azm's statement of 30th May (forecasting signature of the pact by 10th June) was prominently noticed next day in Ahmed Salid's talk, which emphasised that the amendments would not touch the basis of the proposed pact. It also said that the proposed pact would not isolate Iraq; its only endeavour was to eliminate foreign influence from Iraq. On 1st June Ahmed Shawqi said the pact would unite the Arabs into a single force able to achieve its aspirations and safeguard its interests; it was not ill-disposed towards any. The need for the Arab to have an independent integrity free of foreign influence and able to stand neutral between East and West was (he said) frankly recognised by the leaders of Syria, Egypt and the Arabian peninsula.

On 2nd June "the Voice of the Arabs" began its transmission with a report of the Iraqi memorandum to Syria, which was said to threaten an Iraqi and Turkish economic boycott if Syria signed the pact. The denials (supra) do not appear to have been mentioned.

LEBANESE AFFAIRS

Changes in the Council of Ministers Baghdad radio reported that on 30th May the Lebanese Council of Ministers had accepted the resignation of Charles Hilou, the Minister of Justice and Health. The Premier, Sami al-Sulh, had taken over the Ministry of Justice (30.5.55). ANA quoted Hilou as saying he had resigned in protest against amendments made by the Chamber of Deputies to Government-sponsored legislation designed to achieve reforms in Government departments (30.5.55). Georges Harawi has been appointed Minister of Health (Beirut 1.6.55).

The Lebanese diplomatic corps Jordan radio reported that the following had been pensioned off: Ahmed al-Daouq, the Lebanese Ambassador in Paris; the Amir Khalid Shihab, Ambassador to Jordan; and Yousif al-Souda, Ambassador to the Vatican (27.5.55). Sharq al-Adna radio said on 28th May that the resignation of Charles Malik, the Ambassador in Washington, had been accepted as from 30th June (28.5.55).

Prosecution of newspapers The Government is prosecuting 'Al-Nahar', 'Sada Lubnan' and 'Al-Zawab' for publishing reports about the Qawmi al-Suri Party which it considers prejudicial to Syrian-Lebanese relations. (ANA 25.5.55)

Arrest of peace partisans Beirut police arrested three persons who were collecting signatures to a peace partisans' petition against the use of atomic bombs. Reporting this on 26th May, ANA said the peace partisans' organisation was run by Awn. (Note: See Summary Part I, No.627, p.20 for a statement by Edmond Awn, a member of the Lebanese peace partisans' delegation to the Soviet Union.)

Arrest of smugglers of narcotics On 1st June, the Lebanese authorities arrested five persons engaged in smuggling hashish and opium from Turkey to Gaza, through Syria and the Lebanon. This group is thought to have partners in some Arab States. Measures are to be taken to destroy all hashish grown in the Lebanon. (ANA 2.6.55)

The boycott of Israel The Lebanese Chamber of Deputies has approved a Bill recommended by the Arab League to all the Arab States, under which sentence of death can be passed on anyone dealing with or spying for Israel. (Sharq al-Adna 31.5.55)

Construction work on Tripoli harbour An Italian company has undertaken to carry out construction work on Tripoli harbour at a cost of 10,000,000 Lebanese pounds. The agreement was signed on 27th May. (Beirut 27.5.55)

Visit of a Yugoslav delegation A four-man Yugoslav parliamentary delegation, headed by Vladimir Zecevic, arrived in Beirut on 3rd June. Zecevic said he was bringing a personal message from President Tito to President Chamoun. The Yugoslav delegation is returning the visit of a Lebanese parliamentary delegation. (Beirut 3.6.55)

P.I. REPORT

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST.

PROPOSED EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN-SAUDI ARABIAN (TRI-PARTITE) AGREEMENT.

Although the final form of this Treaty proposed initially by Egypt as a counter to the Turco-Iraqi Pact, has not been

Although the parties to this Treaty, proposed initially by Egypt as a counter to the Turco-Iraqi Pact, have not been able to reach final agreement on its ultimate form, the United Kingdom Embassy in Damascus believes signature will eventually take place. There has been some improvement in relations between Iraq and Egypt and it is probable that the Tri-Partite Pact will permit Iraqi signature and will not contain a hostile reference to the Turco-Iraqi Pact. (Cairo memorandum 385)

GAZA

No agreement has been reached on the agenda for the proposed Israel-Egyptian talks on the situation at Gaza. Colonel Nasser has recommended

- (a) The Burns' four proposals;
- (b) the Nasser one kilometre withdrawal plan.

In order to get Israel's Agreement to this Agenda, General Burns has suggested the inclusion of a third item "Any other Measures to Reduce Border Tension".

Bullock (Charge d'Affaires at Tel Aviv) considers Israel could easily take the Gaza strip, but is unlikely to do since the 300,000 Palestinian refugees living there would be an embarrassing liability. We have been informed by the New Zealand Government that the earlier, somewhat alarmist, view of the State Department have now been modified. The United Kingdom is of the opinion that the high-level talks should remove much of the border tensions. (Memo. 273 from Wellington Despatch No. 8 from Tel Aviv.

F 181/2/4



CONFIDENTIAL

181/2/4

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

Memo No. 385

DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

21 JUN 1955

CANBERRA.

Box 273

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION.
CAIRO.

15th June, 1955

CONFIDENTIAL

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN/SAUDI ARABIAN AGREEMENT

I refer to our Memorandum No. 377 of 9th June concerning the proposed Tripartite Pact, as it is now widely known, despite the fact that the Yemen will probably be a party to it.

2. The latest indications are now that the Pact will be signed. It appears likely that Egypt and Saudi Arabia will pay the price demanded from each of them - about £Stg.11 million each, leaving about £Stg.3 million for Syria to contribute. Apart from the financial aspect, the Embassy in Damascus believes that the Pact is more likely to come to fruition because of lessening Iraqi/Egyptian tension and because the Lebanon has reduced her opposition to it slightly. This shift in the Lebanese attitude was partly forced on her by the recent Saudi threats, following which she "was obliged" to assure the Saudis, publicly, that she will not adhere to the Turco/Iraqi Pact.

3. On 9th June the Syrian Foreign Minister, Khaled el Azm made a written statement of foreign policy to the Syrian Parliament. In this he stated that efforts had been made by the United States, Britain and Turkey to persuade Syria to join the Turco/Iraqi Pact but it had been decided to go ahead with talks on the tripartite pact and these were being prolonged only to ensure that the pact would be perfect in all respects - military, political and economic. There were six points upon which agreement had been reached -

- (i) Creation of a special council charged with working out a common foreign policy;
- (ii) That member states would negotiate with other powers in unity;
- (iii) The unification of markets;
- (iv) An economic planning Council;
- (v) A united Arab Bank;
- (vi) Unified command of the armed forces of the three countries and a combined Arab Army, with its headquarters in Damascus, which will be financed from a joint fund.

4. He said that Syria had rejected the Turco/Iraqi Pact on the grounds that it would divide the Arab States into two camps, and might be used to bring about an end to the Israeli-Arab dispute. The tripartite pact was not aimed against Iraq however, he added.

1. Mr. MacArthur

2. Mr. Phipps

Copy sent D.L.

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5. If the Pact is now signed it seems likely that the Syrian desire to leave it open to Iraq and to other Arab States will be embodied in it and that it will contain no hostile reference to the Turco/Iraqi Pact.

6. A copy of this memorandum is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

Following the visit of the Syrian representative to the External Affairs Officer, London, the following information was received from the Syrian representative:

1. Following the visit of the Syrian representative to the External Affairs Officer, London, the following information was received from the Syrian representative:

2. The Iraqi side is confirmed by British Embassy reports that Baghdad, despite the fact that the Syrian side will talk of the imminent conclusion of the negotiations.

3. The Syrian side itself the possibility of the over against the Syrian side of the Syrian side to have been received in the association of the Syrian side of the Syrian side to have been received. The British Embassy in Damascus reported that the Syrian side has been able to communicate satisfactory relations with the Syrian side, and reports that the only trials have occurred at the Syrian side and Syrian members of the Syrian side on the Syrian side of the Syrian side.

4. A copy of this memorandum is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

This is the important thing I think of. I think these few countries can be brought to participate in the Syrian side. I think that the Syrian side will not have to be got over.

H.D. White
(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

21 JUN 1955

CANBERRA

181/2/4

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
CAIRO.

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

Memo No. 377.

9th June, 1955.

CONFIDENTIAL.The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN/SAUDI-ARABIAN AGREEMENT.

I refer to our Memorandum No. 365 of the 2nd June, concerning the continued delay in signing the proposed Egyptian/Syrian/Saudi-Arabian Agreement.

2. Following the visit of the Iraqi ex-Prime Minister, Tawfiq Suwaidi, to Damascus at the end of May, the Iraqi Government is of the opinion that the Pact is unlikely to materialise. The Iraqis see the political scene in Syria as being largely dominated by manoeuvring for the presidential elections in August and they suspect that Syria wants to spin out time by discussing the Pact inconclusively until then. They report that Egypt and Saudi-Arabia are reluctant to make the large contributions to joint defence which Syria is demanding as the price of her adherence, even though Syria has now suggested that £Syrian 250,000,000. be fixed as the upper limit of the joint contributions.

3. This Iraqi view is confirmed by British Embassy reports from Damascus, despite the fact that the Cairo Press still talks of "the imminent conclusion of the tri-partite Pact".

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4. In Syria itself the prosecution of the case against those members of the P.P.S. alleged to have been involved in the assassination of Colonel Adnan El-Malky appears to have lost momentum. The British Embassy in Damascus believes that the Government has been unable to accumulate sufficient evidence even for a Military Tribunal, and reports that the only trials being conducted at the moment are against members of the P.P.S. on the charge of being members.

5. A copy of this Memorandum is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

1. Mr. M. Mella *new info*
2. Mr. P. P. *2/16/5*

Copy on 205/2/1

22/6

H. D. White
(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

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DRAFT P.I. REPORT.

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST.

MIDDLE EAST DEFENCE

Differences between Iraq on the one hand, and Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia on the other, continue. However, the proposed Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian Agreement, which was designed to isolate Iraq, following its signature of the Turco-Iraqi Pact, has still not been signed. The delay seems to have arisen because Syria has temporized. There is now a possibility that a clause forbidding the signatories to join the Turco-Iraqi pact will not be included in the Agreement. However, even if this is the case, the bitterness created between the Arab countries will undoubtedly delay their participation in a Middle East defence organization.

EGYPTIAN-ISRAEL RELATIONS

F 181/2/4
Tension on the Egyptian-Israel border continues to remain at a dangerous level, caused by Egyptians (but not regular forces) continuing to mine Israel patrol tracks and to fire at Israel personnel in Israel territory and by Israelis continuing to patrol right up to and along the demarcation line. These Egyptian attacks lead in turn to reprisal raids by the Israelis.

The British American and French Governments in concert have urged the Egyptian and Israel Governments to accede to General Burns' proposal for high level talks as the best immediate hope of reducing tension. Sharett has agreed to this and also to include in the agenda the Egyptian proposal for the withdrawal of both parties' forces one kilometre from the demarcation line. Although Nasser initially refused a meeting, he has now consented, although unfortunately not at the highest level.

(Note from Commonwealth Relations Office and telegram 95 from Cairo)

SOUTH AFRICA

On 9th June the Nationalist Government's Senate Bill was passed in the South African Assembly by 79 votes to 46. It is likely that it will

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2.

receive Senate approval also. The Bill, provides for an increase in the number of Senators and a revision in the method of their election. Its purpose is to give the Government the two-thirds majority of both Houses required to amend certain clauses of the Constitution in particular, the removal of the Cape Colomed voters from the common electoral roll. Moreover, the English speaking community believes that eventually the Nationalist Party will use its new power to abolish English as one of the two official languages of the Union.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper.....

File No. 181/2/4

Published at.....

Date June 1955

MOVES FOR AN EGYPTIAN-IRAQI RAPPROCHMENTSyrian Suggestions of Including Iraq in the Tripartite Pact

In a statement made to ANA Ihsan al-Jabiri, the Chairman of the Syrian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, said that attempts were being made to bring Iraq into the projected Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi pact. He declined to say who was making these attempts; but he expressed the hope that they would be successful, for the sake of preserving Arab unity (ANA 6.6.55). According to ANA, Syria had proposed an amendment to the tripartite Arab pact providing that any Arab States might be allowed to join the pact after it had been signed by the original three participant States (ANA 8.6.55).

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, however, declared in a statement to the Iraqi 'Al-Bilad' that his Government knew nothing about the reported efforts to bring Iraq into the tripartite pact. The original idea behind this pact was to isolate Iraq; if this idea were changed, each Arab State would adopt whatever attitude was in conformity with Arab interests. In accordance with the Arab collective security pact, Iraq had offered military help to Egypt following the recent Israeli attacks; if Egypt had been a member of the Turkish-Iraqi pact, Turkey too would have been obliged to help Egypt. Israel was likely to continue her aggressions until she felt that the Arabs were a real power to reckon with; and this could come about if the dispute between the Arab States were stopped. (Sharq al-Adna 15.30, 8.6.55)

Lebanese Initiatives in Syria and Egypt

President Chamoun of the Lebanon was reported to be sponsoring moves for (1) postponing discussions on the tripartite pact until after the Turkish leaders' visit to the Lebanon; (2) amending the Turkish-Iraqi Pact so as to make it acceptable to Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia; (3) preparing a meeting of Arab Premiers (Sharq al-Adna 05.45, 4.6.55). The former Lebanese Premier, Al-Yafi, after visits to Cairo and to Damascus at the instance of President Chamoun, expressed hopeful views about the possibility of an Egyptian-Iraqi reconciliation (ANA 4 and 11.6.55). Adil Usairan, the President of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, went to Damascus on a similar mission at the behest of the Lebanese President (ANA 8.6.55).

The former Lebanese Premier Sayib Salam, who arrived in Cairo on 8th June after a previous visit to Beirut, had talks with Abd al-Nasir, Salah Salim and the Iraqi Ambassador to Egypt. He said that his visit was private; he was not sent by the Lebanese President or Premier. He said that the Arab States' unanimous support for Egypt against Israel was a proof of the better atmosphere in Arab relations (Sharq al-Adna 11.30, 9.6.55). Cairo radio referred to Sayib Salam's visit and his "efforts to reconcile points of view on Arab policy". It said that he had proposed to the Egyptian leaders that a general conference of Arab leaders should be held "for frank discussions removed from any foreign influence from whatever source". (Cairo 12.30 and 21.00, 12.6.55)

Another Lebanese visitor to Egypt was Kamal Jumblat, the leader of the Lebanese Socialist Progressive Party. In statements reported by Cairo radio and ANA he expressed unqualified support for the tripartite pact, as being "a great step forward towards the achievement of union among the Group of Arab States". The Turkish-Iraqi Pact, he said, would go the way of the Saadabad Pact (ANA and Cairo 12.30, 11.6.55). At a press conference on 11th June Jumblat said that there was a move on foot to bring Iraq into the present tripartite talks; but he thought that, in view of Iraq's known attitude and of the Lebanese government's "partiality for the Turkish-Iraqi Pact", this was inadvisable (ANA 12.6.55). Jumblat had talks with Abd al-Nasir on 12th June (Cairo 12.30, 12.6.55).

CONFIDENTIAL

S.12/5/1

Memo No. 387

Box 273

Australian Legation,
CAIRO

15th June, 1955

CONFIDENTIAL

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

SYRIAN POLITICAL SITUATION

In a recent interview with the United States Ambassador to Syria, the Syrian Prime Minister Sabri el-Assali told him that he was very depressed about the political situation, which he considered had never been worse.

2. Assali said that although there was a nominal Cabinet, real power was exercised by a body of four, namely, himself, Khaled el-Azm, General Shukeir (the Chief of Staff) and Akram Hourani (the leader of the left-wing Ba'ath Socialist Party). Shukeir, although weak and scared of the left-wing young men of the Army, was trying to keep the Army quiet and limit its political activities. He (Assali) claimed to be doing the same. The trouble was the combination of Hourani and Khaled el-Azm. The former was trying to run the country through exploiting the Army's power and Khaled el-Azm did nothing to oppose him - indeed the reverse because he wanted left-wing support for his candidature for the Presidency.

3. The British Embassy feels that Assali's analysis is correct, but that Khaled el-Azm's stocks are falling. The Embassy reports that generally speaking most people in Syria are disgusted and in despair over the present situation - "with the leftist tail wagging the dog." There seems, however, no way out of the impasse, at least until the Presidential elections in August are over. Even then it will be difficult to do much - at least constitutionally - until the present Parliament can, on the President's invitation, be dissolved, say, at the earliest in March, 1956.

(Sgd) H. D. WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

→ 181/2/4

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CONFIDENTIAL

P.I. BULLETIN

DISSENSION WITH THE ARAB LEAGUE

It will be recalled that the Egyptian Government brought great pressure to bear on Iraq to prevent it negotiating the Turco-Iraqi Pact, ostensibly because it maintained that Arab opinion was not yet ready for association with the Western powers in Middle East defence, but more probably for fear that its hegemony of the Arab League would be broken. Subsequent to the conclusion of the Turco-Iraqi Pact, Egypt, in order to isolate Iraq from the Arab world, secured Saudi Arabian and Syrian support for a number of principles which the three governments intended to incorporate in a formal agreement. These were:

- (i) non-participation in the Turco-Iraqi or any other pact;
- (ii) the establishment of an Arab organization for joint defence to provide for:
 - ~~(i)~~ (a) resisting aggression against any member of the organization;
 - (b) the establishment of a permanent joint command to supervise the training, supply and deployment of military forces placed at its disposal by each member State;
- (iii) the establishment of an Arab Economic Council to co-ordinate economic policy.

2. Agreement on this statement of principles was reached early in March 1955 and although it had been agreed to draw up a formal agreement, later that month, this has not yet been done. The first sign that a Pact between Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia might never be negotiated, at least in the anti-Iraq form originally envisaged by Egypt, was the visit to Iraq of the Syrian Foreign Minister Khaled el-Azm. The Communique issued at the end of the discussions, on 19th March, 1955, stressed the fraternal sentiments of Syria and Iraq towards all Arab countries, but particularly towards one another, and went on to say that the Iraqi Government had explained its foreign policy and affirmed that it had been, and still was placing the interests of Arab countries and their safety above everything else.

The Syrian delegation, for its part, left "fully acquainted with the Iraqi standpoint, and promised to submit it to the Syrian Government, together with its views as to the steps which should be taken to unify Arab ranks and to bring about the desired good understanding between the Arab countries".

3. On 30th March, 1955, Khaled el-Azm visited Cairo for discussions with Egyptian and Saudi Arabian representatives to finalize the projected agreement. At this meeting the Syrians insisted on the deletion of the clause forbidding adherence to the Turco-Iraqi Pact. They also suggested that Egypt should provide £20,000,000 for the expansion of the Syrian armed forces. Later an alternative draft for an "Arab Pact for the unification of Foreign, Military and Economic Affairs" was drawn up by Syria for discussion among Arab delegations at Bandung. It provided for the establishment of a permanent Council of Foreign Ministers of member states which would determine the general outlines of Arab policy. A unified Arab Army with headquarters in ~~M~~ Damascus would also be formed. The Army would be financed from annual contributions by member States of ten per cent of their total budgets. The proposed agreement also provided for a customs union of its members and other economic measures.

4. Clearly the Syrians have been less than enthusiastic about the Pact in its original form. This seems to derive from a conflict between the President and certain members of Sabri el Assali's Government on the one hand and left-wing elements both outside and within Parliament who prefer a neutralist policy and therefore desire conclusion of the Pact with ^{Egypt}~~Syria~~ and Saudi Arabia. This group owes its strength to two factors. Firstly the present Government could not remain in office without its parliamentary support and in the second place strong elements within the Army also favour a neutralist policy. The President and the anti-Egyptian element within the Government have been concerned that the Army would stage a coup d'etat if the P act were not signed. The Syrian President's fear of this development led him to ask Iraq

to obtain from its allies agreement to the temporary despatch of Iraqi forces to Syria in the event of a coup d'etat by the Syrian Army. The United Kingdom advised against any intervention by Iraq, mainly because such action would give substance to fears that the Turco-Iraqi Pact was directed against the independence of Syria and Lebanon and also because it would be impossible to use the Turco-Iraqi Pact as a basis for building Middle East defence.

5. An event directly connected with the above mentioned division was the assassination on 22nd April, 1955, of Colonel Adnan el-Malky, Assistant Chief of Staff of the Syrian Army. The assassination of Malki was undoubtedly inspired by political considerations. He was the dominant political figure in the Army and the leader of the left-wing element favouring the Pact with Egypt. His assassination, far from reducing the likelihood of Syria negotiating a Pact directed against Iraq, has enabled the left-wing group to strengthen its position by exploiting widespread public anger with the assassination. Moreover, when delivering an eulogy on Malky, the Prime Minister said investigation had shown that the assassination was part of a conspiracy to overthrow the Constitution, to seize power and to change the country's policy. He stated that the "people concerned had thrown themselves into the arms of a foreign power and asked for her assistance in order to effect a coup d'etat".

6. According to the Under-Secretary of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, real differences in the Syrian and Egyptian viewpoints persist and consequently it is unlikely that the Pact will be signed for some time. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that eventually some agreement will be negotiated, even though it may not take the form originally envisaged, i.e. purely and simply a counter to the Turco-Iraqi Pact. However, the Iraqi Government does not take too sanguine a view of this possibility. Recently, in a Note addressed to the Syrian Government it threatened to impose an economic boycott if Syria adhered to the project agreement.

7. Neither the Lebanon nor Jordan has shown any signs of departing from its attitude of neutrality in the conflict between Egypt and Iraq. A widespread report that King Saud of Saudi Arabia had sent a message to President Shamoun of the Lebanon, accusing the Lebanon of covertly supporting the Turco-Iraqi Pact under the guise of neutrality and applying pressure on Syria and Jordan to join the Pact, led to a debate in the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies on 12th May, 1955. During the debate the Prime Minister, Sami el-Solh said that the Lebanon was against excluding Iraq or any other Arab country from the Arab bloc. The Lebanon, he said, was trying to reconcile the opposing views of Egypt and Iraq on Arab defence. Each wanted the Lebanon to side with it, although this would in no way help settle their differences. Lebanon, the Prime Minister concluded was prepared to join the projected Egyptian-Saudi-Syrian Defence Pact on the condition that Iraq was not excluded from it, but that at the present time his Government had no intention of joining either it or the Turco-Iraqi Pact. In order to bridge the gap between Egypt and Iraq, President Shamoun of the Lebanon has proposed an extraordinary meeting at prime ministerial level of the Arab League Council to discuss differences between its members.

8. As regards Jordan, a new Cabinet has taken office which contains a number of Ministers favourably disposed towards Iraq. As a result there may be a lessening of Saudi Arabian influence in Jordan affairs but it is not expected that the change will result in Jordan acceding to the Turco Iraqi Pact in the near future.

9. These developments suggest that it is by no means certain that the Turco-Iraqi Pact will ever constitute the nucleus of a broadly based regional defence organization. Even Pakistan has declined an invitation to accede at the present time. In doing so it pointed out that while appreciating the reasons for the prompt accession of the United Kingdom to the Pact, it would have been better pleased had the United Kingdom waited until one or more other Middle East countries had joined.



CONFIDENTIAL

181/2/4

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

10 JUN 1955

CANBERRA.

Box 273

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION.
CAIRO.

2nd June, 1955.

CONFIDENTIAL

Memo No. 365

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN-SAUDI ARABIAN AGREEMENT

It will be recalled that according to inspired reports the signing date for the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian Agreement had been fixed as prior to the Bandung Conference, during the Conference and immediately following the Conference. The latest date given regularly in the press is 10th June, but the Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry told me last night that not only was this most unlikely, but that there is still wide divergence of views on a final text.

2. The Iraqi Government continues strongly to oppose the projected Agreement and has addressed another Note to the Syrian Government threatening an economic boycott since she regards the Pact as a hostile action which would isolate her from the rest of the Arab world. In the meantime, one Iraqi ex-Prime Minister has been "explaining the Iraqi attitude" to the Syrian Government and he, together with another ex-Prime Minister, have been having talks with the Lebanese Government.

3. President Shamoun of the Lebanon is still obviously anxious to play the role of mediator and has now suggested an extraordinary meeting of the Arab League Council to discuss differences between the members. He has suggested that the meeting should be at a Prime Ministerial level.

4. The Egyptian reaction to this proposal is not yet known, but it is possible that the Egyptians would now be content if their proposals for an Agreement with Syria and Saudi Arabia could be given a decent burial, although it is difficult to see how this could be brought about without further damage to the Regime's prestige.

5. A copy of this memorandum is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

Mr. McMillan

I have prepared a note for you explaining all the ins & outs of this question

(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

M. P. for

Copy on 173/11/23

CONFIDENTIAL

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181/2/4

Memo No. 339

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
CAIRO.

19th May, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

THE PROPOSED SAUDI/SYRIAN/EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT.

Since our Memorandum No. 328 of the 12th May, there does not appear to have been any progress towards the signing of the proposed Saudi/Syrian/Egyptian agreement, although announcements continue from Damascus and Cairo to the effect that it will soon be signed.

2. The main development during the week which has been reported in the Press was the presentation by Iraq to Syria of an official Note. According to the Press, the Note made the following points:-

1. The Iraqi Government regards the tri-partite Arab Pact as a hostile act directed against itself.
2. Iraq will not join this Pact, and if Syria insists on signing it, it will be responsible for the serious consequences resulting from such a move.
3. Iraq is willing to reconsider the old Arab Collective Security Pact and is prepared to accept and implement any amendment agreed upon by the countries concerned.

One newspaper reported that there was a fourth point in the Note, which said that the projected tri-partite pact does not serve Arab interests and is aimed at sowing the seeds of dissension among the Arabs.

3. According to the Press, the Iraqi Note has been rejected by the Syrian Government and that in her reply Syria stated that "Syrian foreign policy will not be directed by inspiration from any Arab or foreign country". The Foreign Minister, Khaled El-Azm, is reported as saying "Syria will pursue the policy which serves its national interests, and it is for public opinion and the nation's representatives to formulate its own political programme."

4. Needless to say, the Egyptian Press did not lose this opportunity of repeating its charges against Iraq as the "tool of the Imperialists" and "her unwarranted interference in Syrian affairs".

H. D. White
(H. D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

1. M_r, M_c, M_d

2. M. P. $\frac{20}{5}$

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S.4/4/1

Memo No. 328

12th May, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

THE PROPOSED SAUDI-ARABIAN/SYRIAN/EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT.

I refer to paragraph 5 of our Memorandum No. 314 of the 5th May, 1955, concerning the effect of the assassination of Colonel El-Malky on the proposed Saudi-Arabian/Syrian/Egyptian Pact.

2. Little progress appears to have been made during the past ten days towards signing the agreement. Announcements, both in Damascus and in Cairo, have made it clear that both Syria and Egypt intend to sign the agreement as soon as possible, but particularly from Damascus have come a number of excuses concerning the delay. The Egyptian Ambassador in Damascus, Brigadier Mahmoud Riad, returned to Damascus on the 8th May after consultations in Cairo on the draft agreement. On the 9th May he announced, after an interview with the Syrian Foreign Minister, that they had discussed the proposed Pact but that "no date had yet been fixed for the resumption of talks on the Pact, as it required further contacts and consultations between the three countries".

3. It would appear that the tension in Syria following Malky's assassination has now begun to relax, and it may well be that the Syrians are again having doubts as to the wisdom of some of the clauses of the proposed Pact, particularly that which specifies a two-thirds majority, if the only adherents to the Pact, as seems likely, are Egypt, Saudi-Arabia and Yemen.

4. With reference to the assassination, the Parti Populaire Syrien has been officially dissolved by the Government, but as yet no prosecutions have taken place, although a number of prominent Parti Populaire Syrien members are still being held. One of the factors which contributed to the relaxing of tension appears to have been criticism of the Government following allegations in the Lebanese Press that torture has been used on some of the arrested Parti Populaire Syrien members and that many of the arrests were "indiscriminate".

(Sgd) H. D. WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

original on 205/2/1

File on 181/2/4

13/5/5

Memo No. 337

19th May, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

LEBANESE/SAUDI-ARABIAN RELATIONS.

It was widely reported on the 12th May that King Saud of Saudi-Arabia had sent a message to President Shamoun of the Lebanon, accusing the Lebanon of covertly supporting the Turco-Iraqi Pact under the guise of neutrality and applying pressure on Syria and Jordan to join the Pact. The message was a verbal one, delivered by Nicola Salem, a Lebanese Deputy, who publicly confirmed that he had delivered such a message and that it also contained a threat to take certain political and economic measures, described by some newspapers as "sanctions", if the Lebanon continued her alleged efforts to induce Syria and Jordan to join the Turco-Iraqi Pact.

2. There is no doubt that the Lebanon took this threat seriously and, in addition to a widespread appeal in the Lebanese press addressed to King Saud, asking him not to carry out his threat, the message precipitated a two-day debate in the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies on foreign policy. The Lebanese are well aware that King Saud could do considerable damage to the sensitive Lebanese economy if he banned Saudi-Arabians from trading with Lebanese firms, many of which have wide interests inside Arabia, and also if he forbade Saudi-Arabian tourists from going to the Lebanon for the summer, where they spend large sums of money in the hill resorts.

3. The debate in the Chamber of Deputies, which took place on the 12th and 13th May, made it clear that the Lebanon intends to continue its mediatory role in the current split amongst the Arab League States. The Prime Minister, Sami El-Solh, said that the Lebanon was against excluding Iraq or any other Arab country from the Arab bloc. The Lebanon, he said, was trying to reconcile the opposing views of Egypt and Iraq on Arab defence, but was being met with difficulties in this respect. Each of the two countries wanted the Lebanon to side with it, although this would in no way help settle their differences. Moreover, the Lebanon was anxious to safeguard her independence and strengthen her national position, he added. He said that the Lebanese Government was prepared to join the projected Egyptian/Saudi/Syrian Defence Pact on the condition that Iraq was not excluded from it, but that at the present time his Government had no intention of joining either it or the Turco-Iraqi Pact.

4. Following the completion of the debate, the Chamber of Deputies passed a resolution supporting the Government's foreign policy and its neutral attitude towards the two pacts. Following this development, on the 14th May the Lebanese President, Shamoun, sent a verbal message to King Saud, through the Lebanese Minister in Jeddah, assuring the King of the Lebanon's respect for his person and her anxiety to strengthen brotherly relations with Saudi-Arabia. The President, in his message, stressed that the mediation by Lebanon in the relations between the Arab States was a sincere one, aimed at restoring the unity of the Arab States. Subsequently, it was reported in some newspapers that President Shamoun was sending the ex-Prime Minister, Abdullah El-Yafi, to Riad in a further effort to make clear the Lebanese position.

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5. As was to be expected, the Egyptian press has lauded King Saud's action, and "Al-Gomhouria", in a leading article, described the Lebanon's neutrality as a "sham". The article dwelt on Shamoun's recent official visit to Turkey and the Turco-Lebanese communique issued after that visit, on Lebanon's "Pressure" on Jordan to join the Turco-Iraqi Pact and, possibly the most rankling of Lebanon's recent sins, on Dr. Charles Malik's "opposition" to the Egyptian Prime Minister at the Bandoeng Conference. Malik's views at Bandoeng were reported in this article to consist of approval of atomic and hydrogen bombs, of wars and of military alliances. As far as is known, the Egyptian Government has so far put no pressure similar to the Saudi on Lebanon, but it is at least likely that the Saudi action had prior Egyptian approval.

(Sgd) H. D. WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

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**PATCHING UP
ARAB UNITY**

**SYRIAN EXPLORATION
IN BAGHDAD**

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BAGHDAD, MARCH 15

Exploratory talks continued here to-day between the visiting Syrian delegation led by the Foreign Minister, Khaled al-Azm, and the Iraqi representatives led by the deputy Prime Minister, Ahmed Mukhtar Baban.

The talks have been largely devoted to Syrian efforts to explain why they have not joined the Turkey-Iraq pact and why they took part in the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian declaration about the proposed formation of a new Arab alliance. The keynote of the Syrian explanation is that the proposed pact would strengthen their defences against Israel. This is not a new argument, and Iraq has pointed out before, and has no doubt repeated now, that a collective security pact already exists for this purpose. A new pact such as that proposed would naturally be weaker, because it would exclude at least two of the strongest armies in the area—the forces of Iraq and Jordan.

'ALEXANDRETTA QUESTION'

It is believed that the Syrian attitude is conditioned by the instability of her internal situation. Much play is being made with the question of the *saniak* of Alexandretta, which was handed over to Turkey during the French mandate. Syrian nationalists have long demanded the return of Alexandretta, but it is difficult to decide whether this embodies a real hope that it will one day be recovered or provides a handy electioneering weapon. At any rate it is now being used, at least in private conversation, as an argument to show that the Syrian Government is unable to associate with Turkey in the absence of a satisfactory settlement of the "Alexandretta question" without causing a public outcry which might bring down the Government.

CONFIDENTIAL

Foreign Office Distribution

LEVANT (GENERAL)

March 7, 1955

Section 1

V 1073/415

VISIT TO SYRIA OF THE EGYPTIAN MINISTER OF NATIONAL GUIDANCE

Sir John Gardener to Sir Anthony Eden. (Received March 7)

(No. 32. Confidential) *Damascus,*
Sir, *March 3, 1955.*

I have the honour to report that Major Salah Salem, the Egyptian Minister of National Guidance, arrived here from Beirut on the morning of February 26. He was proposing to leave for Amman, accompanied by the Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the morning of March 3.

2. In Damascus Major Salem was extremely active. He called on the headquarters of all the major political parties. In addition, he had conversations with a large number of leading political personalities and other notables. He called on the President of the Republic and the President of the Chamber. His real business, however, was with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chief of Staff, each of whom he saw several times. He was entertained lavishly by the Government, and on several occasions by the Officers' Club. He himself gave a dinner to the Government, leading political personalities and the press.

3. It was at a dinner given by the Chief of Staff that Major Salem gave the most important of the several speeches he delivered in Damascus. In welcoming Major Salem the Chief of Staff specifically supported the idea of a "unified Arab army and a unified Arab command," and said that the Syrian army was keen to make these hopes into realities within a few days in order that Palestine might be restored to the Arab fatherland. Major Salem's reply was an enthusiastic, eloquent performance. He declared that he spoke as a responsible politician and that Egypt's deepest hope was a unified Arab army under a single command. He offered to share all Egyptian military equipment with the Syrian army, and said that as far as Egypt was concerned the headquarters of the unified command could be in any Arab capital. He concluded: "I should like to say that Syria and Egypt

are determined to extend this invitation within a short period to all Arab Governments wishing to unify with us their armies, policies, struggles and economies."

4. Major Salem took the opportunity of haranguing the crowds which gathered when he visited some of the political party headquarters. He was bitter in his denunciation of Iraq, who, he said, had bound herself to the coloniser and so split Arab unity just when Egypt had freed herself from British occupation. Nuri as-Said not trusting the Arabs had put his faith in the Turks, the Persians, the Pakistanis, the Americans and the British. Who was it, he asked, but the Americans and the British who were responsible for the Palestine *débâcle*? He was confident that the Syrian Government would approve of his suggestion for a unified army. Egypt had established ten new arms factories, which were even capable of producing jet aircraft. He stressed that the Egyptian Government were devoted supporters of Islam. He was warmly applauded.

5. There have been demonstrations in most of the larger Syrian towns, both for and against Major Salem and the policy he stands for. Those who have demonstrated in protest have mainly been Moslem Brothers and supporters of the Parti Populaire Syrien, who look forward to an enlarged Fertile Crescent scheme. The most serious incidents, involving some casualties between rival demonstrators, occurred in Deir ez Zor where the army was forced to take control. It is significant that none of the demonstrations were on a really large scale. The political parties were active but the general populace showed no spontaneous enthusiasm.

6. I have already reported by telegram my various interviews with the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. These show that Major Salem's public statements fairly represent the essence of

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the proposals he has made to the Syrian Government. This seems to be in accordance with the recent Egyptian policy of appealing to the Arab people over the heads of their Governments. At any rate the press believes that Major Salem has told the Syrian Government that, since the Arab Collective Security Pact has been destroyed by Iraq's alliance with Turkey, a new pact is necessary. The main points of the reported proposal are as follows:—

- (a) A unified military command.
- (b) Unification of the economic and foreign policies of the participating States.
- (c) No State participating in the pact should conclude any alliances without the approval of all the other participating States.
- (d) The pact would be open to all Arab States.
- (e) Egypt is in a position to contribute weapons to the unified army.

The press in general believes that if Iraq wished to join she would first be required to renounce her pact with Turkey.

7. Major Salem's visit and proposals have, of course, been the principal subject of press comment since his arrival. Of those papers which express a clear opinion, one-third deplore the Egyptian attitude. The remaining two-thirds support it, but some of them believe Iraq was justified in making a pact with Turkey. Some of those papers which attack Egypt, principally the Moslem Brotherhood paper, also attack Iraq. Syrian press opinion is therefore far from being unanimous, and in this it seems to reflect public opinion.

8. The attitude of various groups towards the Egyptian proposals can only be fully understood in the context of Syrian internal politics. The previous Government was violently attacked for what was alleged to be its pro-Iraqi policy. Though, in fact, foreign policy had little, if anything, to do with the fall of Fares el Khoury's Government, the new Cabinet came to power in a situation where it was expected that it would pursue a different policy. Indeed, a change in foreign policy was the only respectable reason which could be advanced for the creation and peculiar composition of the new Government. The Government's parliamentary majority is relatively small and precarious. The consequence is that

if the new Government is to remain in office all the groups which support it must support or at least cannot reject outright the Egyptian proposals. The Opposition, if it is not to be discredited, must also stick to its guns. In these circumstances the most uncomfortable groups are the Right-wing supporters of the Government, led by the Prime Minister himself, for if the Egyptian proposals prevail it will be widely regarded as a Left-wing victory. The fact that Major Salem stayed three days longer in Damascus than he had intended, and then left without an official communiqué having been issued, was due almost entirely to the delaying tactics of the Prime Minister and the moderate group which he leads.

9. It is clear that the major encountered greater difficulties in Syria than he expected. It is still too early to say whether or not he will succeed in overcoming them. But Salah Salem has allies outside Syria. In addition to all the considerable force which Egypt can bring to bear on Syria, there are the persuasive arguments, both monetary and otherwise, which come from other interested Powers, notably Saudi Arabia, the Soviet Union and possibly France. It is, however, interesting to note that, whereas a few weeks ago the sentiment of Arab unity, which is one of the fundamental principles of Syrian politics, militated against Iraq, a slight reversal of feeling is to be noticed. Egypt is now seen by some as disturbing Arab unity. Is it not in our interests, some ask, to have good relations with our neighbour and sister State Iraq? Moreover, would it not be imprudent to have bad relations with so powerful a neighbour as Turkey? But there is one sentiment equal in strength to that of Arab unity and that is fear and hatred of Israel. The recent Gaza incident added point to their argument. I have no doubt the Egyptians have been harping upon this, and if they succeed in forming their new pact it will, even more than the original Arab Collective Security Pact, be directed against Israel.

10. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Amman, Bagdad, Beirut, Cairo, Jedda, Tel Aviv, Ankara, Washington and Paris, and to the Head of the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.

J. GARDENER.

CONFIDENTIAL

S.12/5/1

Memo No. 314

5th May, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

CONFIDENTIAL.

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA.

I refer to our Memorandum No. 287 of the 28th April concerning the assassination of Colonel Adnan el-Malky by a member of the Syrian Nationalist Socialist Party, or, as it is known in French, the "Parti Populaire Syrien".

2. We have now seen a report of the incident from the British Embassy in Damascus which confirms the outline, gathered from press reports, given in our last Memorandum. The Embassy agrees that the assassination was probably political and states that Colonel Malky was undoubtedly the leader of that section of the army which favours the Ba'ath Socialist party and the proposed Saudi/Syrian/Egyptian agreement. In fact, Colonel Malky was the dominant political figure in the army, and over recent months Brigadier Shoukeir, the Chief of Staff, appears to have been dominated by Colonel Malky.

3. The Embassy confirms that the Prime Minister, Sabri el-Assali, when delivering an eulogy on Colonel Malky in the Chamber of Deputies, did in fact state that investigation had shown that the assassination was part of a conspiracy to overthrow the Constitution, to seize power and to change the country's policy. He stated: "the people concerned had thrown themselves into the arms of a foreign power and asked for her assistance in order to effect a 'coup d'etat'". It was at the end of this debate that Parliament waived the parliamentary immunity of the one Parti Populaire Syrien deputy who was subsequently arrested.

4. In general, the Embassy sees this assassination as one more symptom of the general tension and air of unrest in Syria. The army are taking advantage of widespread anger at the assassination and the general fear of more active military intervention in internal affairs to create a favourable atmosphere for the conclusion of the proposed pact with Egypt and Saudi-Arabia. They are spreading the story that the "Colonising" powers are behind the assassination, and they are being helped by the Communists who are naming the Americans and the British as the guilty parties. In order further to reduce opposition to the agreement, the military are arresting people known for their pro-Iraqi sympathies, as well as members of the Parti Populaire Syrien.

5. The Embassy is of the opinion, therefore, that the assassination, exploited by army and left-wing propaganda, may possibly precipitate the conclusion of the tri-partite pact, perhaps at the cost of dropping some or all of the Syrian counter proposals (our Memorandum No. 280 of the 26th April) and signing a pact on the lines originally envisaged. The Embassy feels, however, that although this may be the short-term result of Malky's murder, Malky was the driving force of the Ba'ath section of the army, and that now that the most politically active section of the army has lost its leader, this could well affect future political alignments within the army, the attitude of the Chief of Staff himself and the ability of the military to impose its views on the civil Government.

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6. The incident has also precipitated a further disagreement between the President, Hashem el-Atassy, and the Cabinet of Sabri el-Assali. The latter had submitted a decree for the President's signature, designed to speed up the process of law and to avoid any unnecessary delay in implementing the sentences of the Military Court on those expected to be convicted of being involved in the assassination of Colonel Malky. When the President refused to sign this decree, the Prime Minister submitted it to the Chamber of Deputies, and on the 3rd May the Chamber unanimously approved a draft law, providing that appeals against sentences passed by the Military Court in connection with charges of harming the internal or external safety of the country should be submitted to and considered by the Court of Cassation within three days from passing sentences. Otherwise, the sentences of the Military Court are to be considered final.

7. A copy of this Memorandum is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

I refer to our Memorandum No. 225 of the 20th April 1933 and to London's Memorandum No. 345 of the 19th April concerning British relations with Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

8. The following are details of the British proposal for an Arab Pact for the unification of foreign, with (H.D. WHITE) Charge d'Affaires a.i. which it is understood was to be discussed in Arab proposals. The same has been made available to us by the British Ambassador.

3. Foreign Affairs.

1. The establishment of a permanent Council of Foreign Ministers of member states. The Council will, by a two-thirds majority, determine the general relations of Arab States with other states and this is to be binding on all the signatories.

2. All the signatories are to be considered as one unit for negotiations with other States.

4. Economic Policy.

1. No customs duties are to be levied on fellow members.

2. Free movement of subjects of member states - no visas, etc.

3. An Economic Council to be established.

4. A joint bank to be established.

5. Military Policy.

1. The formation of a unified Arab Army in peace and war, with its headquarters in Baghdad. The Commander to be appointed by decision of the signatories (presumably by 2/3rds majority).

2. The Arab Army is to be financed by annual contributions by member states of 1% of their total population. The Arab's total budget average 2000 million per annum. This equals the figure of 100 million a year already discussed in the Press and reported in our Memorandum under reference.

3. The establishment of a Military Council (a) to plan the increase in the military strength and arms industries of the member states and (b) to fix the military duties of each state and the expenditure on the armament.

4. The two most significant aspects of this Pact are the creation of an Arab Army and the creation of an Arab State which would be a source of new trade relationships with the West. In addition, the

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although the door is thus being held open for Iraq to subscribe to this new agreement, the initial Iraqi reaction is not favourable to it and that for the time being Iraq is concentrating its energies within the Taurus-Iraq Pact and its development under the special agreement reached with Britain. The two-thirds majority rule is a very important attempt to bring both Egypt and Iraq into the agreement. It is difficult to bring two-thirds of the eight potential signatories agreeing to any controversial issues.

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

Memo No. 250

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION
CAIRO.

26th April, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

SECRET.

EGYPTIAN-SAUDI-SYRIAN AGREEMENT.

(S.F. WHITE)

I refer to our Memorandum No. 258 of the 20th April and to London's Memorandum No. 345 of the 19th April concerning Syria's relations with Egypt and Saudi-Arabia.

2. The following are details of the Syrian proposal for an "Arab Pact for the unification of foreign, military and economic affairs" which it is understood was to be discussed at Bandoeng. This draft proposal has been made available to us by the British Embassy.

3. Foreign Affairs.

1. The establishment of a permanent Council of Foreign Ministers of member states. The Council will, by a two-thirds majority, determine the general outlines of Arab States policy and this is to be binding on all the signatories.

2. All the signatories are to be considered as one unit for negotiations with other States.

Economic Policy.

1. No customs duties to be levied on fellow members.
2. Free movement of nationals of member states - no visas, etc.
3. An Economic Council to be established.
4. A joint bank to be established.

Military Policy.

1. The formation of a unified Arab Army in peace and war, with its headquarters in Damascus. The Commander to be appointed by decision of the signatories (presumably by 2/3rds majority).

2. The joint army is to be financed by annual contributions by member states of 10% of their total budgets. (As Egypt's total budget averages £200. million per annum, this explains the figure of £20. million a year already discussed in the Press and reported in our Memorandum under reference.)

3. The establishment of a Military Council (a) to plan the increase in the military strength and arms industries of the member states and (b) to fix the military duties of each state and its expenditure on its own army.

4. The two most significant points of this draft are the omission of any reference to Iraq, and the omission of any exclusion clause directed at states which have treaty relationships with the West. We understand that

1. Mr. M. Mellan - this shows that signing really must have been thought about agreeing with Egypt to isolate Iraq
2. Mr. P. P. P. -
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although the door is thus being held open for Iraq to subscribe to this new agreement, the initial Iraqi reaction is not favourable to it and that for the time being Iraq wishes to concentrate its energies within the Turco-Iraqi Pact and its development under the special agreement reached with Britain. The two-thirds majority rule would appear to be a rather transparent attempt to please both Egypt and Iraq, since it is difficult to imagine two-thirds of the eight potential signatories agreeing on any controversial issues.

5. A copy of this Memorandum is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

H.D. White
(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

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P.I. REPORT.

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST.

SYRIA-RELATIONS WITH IRAQ.

The External Affairs Officer, London, reports that the Syrian Government is afraid that the Syrian Army, which has strong left-wing elements within it, will force it to sign the proposed agreement with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, (this latter agreement was initiated by Egypt to counter the Turco-Iraqi Pact). To strengthen its resolve the Syrian Government has asked Iraq to obtain from its allies agreement to the temporary despatch of Iraqi forces to Syria in the event of a coup d'etat by the Syrian Army. The United Kingdom has advised against any intervention by Iraq, mainly because such action would give substance to fears that the Turco-Iraqi Pact was directed against the independence of Syria and Lebanon. It would then be impossible to use the Turco-Iraqi Pact as a basis for building Middle East defence.

MIDDLE EAST DEFENCE.

General Cawthorn reports that Pakistan is in no hurry to accede to the Turco-Iraqi Pact, but will probably wait until at least one other Middle East country has joined. Apparently, Pakistan advised the United Kingdom that it would have preferred the latter not to have acceded to the Pact until one or more Middle East countries had also joined.

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ISRAEL-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

Since the Gaza incident, conditions on the Israel Egyptian frontier have remained disturbed, a number of serious incidents having taken place.

TUNISIA

On 22nd April French and Tunisian delegations negotiating home rule for Tunisia recorded their agreement in principle on all the major subjects at issue. (However, the situation may be eased following agreement on specific measures to apprehend infiltrations and reduce local tension between the two countries. However, the Australian Legation, Tel Aviv reports that if the situation should deteriorate still further Sharett may abandon or be forced to abandon his policy of furthering Israel interests through political means.)

Mr. Plimball

See
Plimball
29/1/55

If this is as serious
as it looks, we may
have a flare-up in the
Middle East arising from
most unworthy causes and
based on petty jealousies.

29/1/55

12/5/1

Box 273

Australian Legation,
CAIRO

Memo No. 287

28th April, 1955

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

ASSASSINATION OF SYRIAN COLONEL

On 22nd April Colonel Adnan el-Malky, Assistant Chief-of-Staff of the Syrian Army was assassinated while watching a football match in Damascus. The assassin was a sergeant in the Syrian Army, who committed suicide immediately after the murder.

2. This is the second violent incident in Syria within one week. The first occurred on 16th April when Ghaleh Shishakly, a cousin of the former President, was shot dead by his uncle, Wasil el-Hourany, a brother of Akram el-Hourany, during a clash between Ba'ath Party members and the Shishakly family in Hama.

3. El-Malky's death has occasioned considerable comment in the Cairo press which has seen the assassination as political. Colonel el-Malky is believed to have been a leader of that section of the Army which supports the left-wing Ba'ath Socialists, who have been strongly opposed to the Turco-Iraqi Pact. The press has reported that the assassin was a member of the Syrian Nationalist Socialist Party who favour the Turco-Iraqi Pact. These reported facts have lead to editorials in the Egyptian press suggesting the presence of a "foreign hand" and that the "imperialists" were behind the assassination.

4. The Syrian Government are reported to have closed the Party's offices and to have arrested a number of its members including the Secretary-General, Sayed el-Mohayri, and Sayed Hanna el Kaswany, the only member of this Nationalist Socialist Party in the Chamber of Deputies. On 27th April the Prime Minister, Sabri el-Assali, told the Chamber that the murder was part of an attempted coup d'etat aimed at the destruction of democratic life in Syria. According to the Egyptian press, Assali also said that "a foreign power had helped to stage the coup."

5. It is interesting that the Iraqi press interprets the assassination as being instigated by Brigadier Shishakly's friends who looked upon Malky as an obstacle in the way of their return to power.

(Sgd) H. D. WHITE

(H.D. WHITE)
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

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In reply quote No. 3/2/2/1/1

Memo No 345/50

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
27 APR 1955
CANBERRA

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.2

19th April, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Syria and Middle East Defence

The Syrian Government, under the threat that the Army will compel it to sign the pact with Egypt and Saudi-Arabia, is still seeking ways and means out of its difficulties by offering to discuss various forms of a tepid draft agreement with Egypt and Saudi-Arabia, and the Syrian Delegation to the Bandoeng Conference has been authorised to discuss possibilities with the Egyptian and Saudi-Arabian Delegations.

2. In addition, the Syrian Government has made an approach to Iraq to help it out of its difficult political situation through the use of Iraqi armed forces. About a week ago, the President of the Syrian Republic approached the Iraqi Ambassador in Damascus and told him that the situation in Syria was becoming more serious. Two-thirds of the Syrian population were in favour of agreement with Iraq but the Army favoured the cause of the left-wing elements outside and within Parliament, who preferred neutralism and so desired the pact with Egypt. Communism was in the increase in the Army and elsewhere. The politicians were frightened by the Army's threats and felt unable to resist pressure to conclude the agreement with Egypt. The situation had been made worse by Turkish threats which had given the Communists valuable help in playing on established Syrian fears of Turkish expansionism. The President considered Syrian politicians needed courage born of the knowledge that they would be protected against a military coup d'état which would abolish the constitutional Government. To this end, Iraq should obtain from her allies agreement to the temporary despatch of Iraqi Forces in Syria in the event of a coup d'état. Turkey must, however, be warned to make no move whatever, for, while Iraqi temporary intervention would be tolerated, any such move by Turkey would raise the Arab world.

3. The Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Crown Prince informed the British Ambassador in Bagdad of this approach. They said that Iraq would take no action without the approval of the United Kingdom, the United States and Turkey. But it would be difficult for them to stand idle in the event of a coup d'etat. The Ambassador warned them of the dangers in the course of action suggested and they repeated that Iraq would take no action without the advice of her friends.

4. The Foreign Office has informed the Iraqis that they could not advise Iraq to intervene in Syria with armed forces in the event of a coup d'état. Such intervention would create a situation more dangerous than the one it was intended to improve; and, by giving substance to fears that it was directed against the independence of Syria and Lebanon, would be likely to put an end to all hope of building the Turko-Iraq Pact into an effective defence organisation for the whole Middle East, including Syria and Lebanon. Moreover, it might well

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-/provoke

- Mr Ma M
- Mr Peter

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Mr. Phillips

11/4/55

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provoke some military action by Israel.

5. The American Ambassador in Damascus saw the Syrian President within the last day or so to discourage him from the idea of invoking Iraqi military intervention.

6. We shall keep you informed of developments.

7. I am sending a copy of this memorandum to the Australian Legation in Cairo.

G. A. Jockel
(G. A. JOCKEL)

for Senior External Affairs Representative



181/2/4
CONFIDENTIAL

26 APR 1955

Box 273

CANBERRA.

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
CAIRO.

20th April, 1955.

CONFIDENTIAL

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

Memo No. 258

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN-SAUDI ARABIAN AGREEMENT

I refer to our memorandum No. 236 of 7th April which contained little more than conjecture on the probable results of the talks between Khaled el-Azm and the Egyptians and Saudi Arabians. We understand now that the Syrians not only stood out for the deletion of clauses forbidding adherence to the Turco-Iraqi Pact and providing for unanimous approval of the members of the projected pact for any alliances with other countries, but that they also suggested that Egypt should provide £20,000,000 for the necessary expansion of the Syrian armed forces. In reply to the Egyptian plea that this was beyond her resources, it was pointed out that Salah Salem had recently made a statement to the effect that Egypt would soon be manufacturing jet aircraft, and would therefore be in a position to meet the arms needs for all the Arab countries.

2. Despite the different approaches of the Egyptians and El-Azm to the question, it is clear that the latter still favours some form of agreement with Egypt. However, his position is made difficult by the fact that the Syrian President, and probably the Prime Minister, are opposed to an agreement and that he does not enjoy the undivided support of the Army. It is expected that the subject will be discussed at Bandung, but we understand that the draft which el-Azm has taken with him is to be no more than a basis for discussion, and that he has no authority to initial an agreement despite the contrary reports in the Egyptian press.

M. Mc M. 1/2/4
Mc P. 1/2/4

H. D. White -
(H.D. WHITE)
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

CONFIDENTIAL

CS
Copy on 205/7/1

27/4

181/2/4
CONFIDENTIAL

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

Memo No. 236

DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

19 APR 1955

CANBERRA.

Box 273

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
CAIRO.

7th April, 1955

CONFIDENTIALThe Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.THE EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN-SAUDI ARABIAN AGREEMENT

In our memorandum No. 217 of 31st March we reported the arrival or imminent arrival of the delegations for the discussions on the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian Agreement. The discussions were described by the press as having lasted for five days, that is from the day of Khaled El Azm's arrival to the day of his departure inclusive.

2. At the end of each day's meeting vaguely worded but reassuring reports appeared in the press and these set the pattern for the reports made at the conclusion of the talks. No official communique was issued.

3. Although we have so far been unable to obtain any authentic information on the substance of the discussions it may be assumed that the Egyptians found the Syrians difficult converts. It is likely that El Azm, whatever his own inclinations, had been instructed to hold out for an amended version of the Damascus communique (our Memorandum No. 166 of 10th March refers), that is one from which the first clause had been deleted, and which would be in effect a more realistic Arab Collective Security Pact to which all Arab States could adhere.

4. The press has stressed that the talks would be resumed either in Cairo or Damascus and possibly this week, but this is clearly impossible since Nasser plans to leave for the Afro-Asian Conference on 8th April. It is significant, too, that press now forecasts that the agreement will be signed after instead of before the Bandung Conference.

5. A copy of this memorandum is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

H.D. White -
(H.D. WHITE)
Secretary

Copy on 205/2/1

CONFIDENTIAL

CABLEGRAM.

181/2/4
SECRET

I. 4623

TWWP:CEB

Dated: 9th April, 1955.

1853

Rec'd: 10th April, 1955.

0900

FROM:

Australian Legation,
CAIRO

65

SECRET

Nassar, Fawzy and the rest of the Egyptian delegation to the Bandung Conference left Cairo on the 8th April. Official visits are being paid en route to Karachi and New Delhi. Nassar will fly to Bandung in Nehru's plane.

2. Gamal Salem has been appointed Acting Prime Minister and Military Governor during Nassar's absence which is expected to be about three weeks.

3. Nassar has left the country at an inopportune moment and his decision to do so springs from a feeling that he can use his tour to restore the Army regime's waning prestige.

4. This began with its diplomatic defeat over Turkish Iraqi Pact and has continued as a result of the failure to get AZU to sign a pact on his latest visit to Cairo. The Syrian doubts have been reinforced by the Turkish Lebanese communique (our memorandum 238) and by reports that Jordan is contemplating joining the Turkish Iraqi Pact.

5. The Regime's prestige suffered a further heavy blow yesterday from the public announcement of what would appear to be the final breaking off of negotiations with the Sudanese on the Nile Waters Agreement, this was coupled crudely with the charge that the leaders of the Sudanese delegation had been discovered supervising printing of pamphlets attacking the Regime.

6. Relations with Israel could hardly be worse and the Egyptian forces in Sinai have been reinforced by two brigade groups. National Guardsmen also been sent to Gaza. Nassar has informed the British Ambassador that any further Israel aggression will be answered in force.

7. The Ambassador also tells me that Sharett has sent word to the Egyptian Government through the Americans that the present tension is becoming intolerable and suggesting immediate ~~top~~ level consultation. United States has informed Ministry that it is for the United Nations to mediate and has suggest Burns should arrange military conference. Burns is expected to come to Cairo for this purpose shortly.

8. Meanwhile internal situation is reflecting Regime's external failures. Labour unrest appears to be growing and strike of Suez Canal employees is threatened for 15th April. Recent moves in economic sphere (my memoranda 192, 208 and 230 refer) were probably intended to appease these elements. It has been also reported that Moslem Brothers are stirring again and that 600 of them have been arrested.

SECRET

-2 **CABLEGRAM.**

SECRET

I. 4623

9. Lastly, I understand \emptyset
no indication, however that there is any widespread discontent-
ment in the Army.

McClure Smith.

10th April, 1955.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE
P.M's.

\emptyset 5 groups omitted.

SECRET



CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

5 APR 1955

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
CAIRO.

CANBERRA.

18/2/4.

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

Memo No. 217

31st March, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

CONFIDENTIAL

SAUDI/EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN AGREEMENT.

I refer to our Despatches Nos. 9 and 10 of the 16th and 23rd March and previous Memoranda concerning the Egyptian reaction to the Turco-Iraqi Pact and her attempt to create a counter bloc consisting of Saudi-Arabia, the Yemen, Syria and herself.

2. On the 30th March, Khaled el-Azm, the Syrian Foreign Minister, accompanied by the Minister for National Economy and Brigadier Shawkat Shoukeir, the Chief of Staff, arrived in Cairo. The Yemen Prime Minister has been here for some days and Faisal of Saudi-Arabia is expected soon. The Cairo Press, while still diligently forecasting a new agreement, is now referring to the current talks as being preliminary to the Prime Ministers' conference which will allegedly produce the agreement. There is no sign that Sabri el-Assali, the Syrian Prime Minister, will come to Cairo.

3. In fact, we now learn from the British Embassy in Damascus that Syria's growing reluctance, as outlined in Despatch No. 10, is becoming even greater. The Nationalist Party, supported by a powerful section of the Army and by, surprisingly enough, the Ba'ath Socialists, are believed to have issued an ultimatum to Khaled el-Azm to the effect that they strongly oppose any anti-Iraq move and that if any agreement with Egypt is signed, Clause 1 of the communique is not to be included. Such a threat by the main constituent of the coalition, and presumably with the backing of the Prime Minister himself and the President (both Nationalists), would appear to make certain that nothing will come of the projected agreement, except possibly a re-phrasing of the platitudes already subscribed to by the parties to the Arab Collective Security Pact and the League itself. The Embassy in Damascus believes also that Shoukeir, whose influence could be decisive, is now adopting a neutral attitude to the affair.

4. It is felt in many quarters that should the Egyptian Government's attempt to isolate Iraq by involving Syria in an anti-Turco/Iraqi agreement fail, it will be in spite of rather than because of the somewhat crude Turkish pressure which has been applied to Syria. The tension between Turkey and Syria, as outlined in paragraph 8 of Despatch No. 10, has not been slackened by repeated reports in the Cairo, and in some Syrian, papers of Turkish troop movements, Turkish over-flying of Syrian territory and, finally, Russian troop moves on the Turkey/Soviet frontier allegedly to help Syria. All of these stories are believed to have no foundation whatsoever, but made good pegs on which to hang the old labels of "Turkish imperialism" and "the out-dated mentality of the Sublime Porte". The force of the Turkish Notes to Syria gave the original ground for these stories, and it is understood that the United Kingdom suggested to Turkey that she moderate her attitude lest it should force the Syrians to unite on the issue in the same way as Iraq united behind Nuri in the face of the intemperate Egyptian attacks.

5/ Whether ...

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- 2 -

5. Whether this advice was followed or not, the last couple of days appear to have witnessed an easing of tension between Turkey and Syria, while the latter searches for a face-saving device to present to Cairo. It is believed that El-Azm and Shoukeir will suggest to Nasser that the conference on the new agreement be held in Damascus, which, if accepted by the Egyptians, almost certainly means an end to the anti-Iraq clause.

6. A copy of this Memorandum is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

H.D. White
(H.D. WHITE)
First Secretary.

CONFIDENTIAL

In reply quote No.

118/12



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

24th March, 1955.

C ONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM NO. 488/55

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra, A.C.T.

SYRIA AND MIDDLE EAST DEFENCE

Cairo memorandum 158 of 9th March, 1955, refers to a Note presented by the U.S. Embassy in Damascus to the Syrian Government bearing on the Syrian reaction, in concert with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, to the Turco-Iraqi Pact.

2. We have discussed the situation in Syria with the Officer-in-Charge, Syria-Lebanon Affairs, Francis O. Allen. We did not, of course, in view of its classification, refer specifically to the contents of the Cairo memorandum 158, but we asked Allen what action the U.S. had taken vis-a-vis Syria in relation to the Turco-Iraqi Pact.

3. Allen told us that the U.S. Ambassador in Syria had informed the Syrian Government informally of U.S. views on the Syrian reaction to the pact, and had subsequently, on request, left an aide memoire embodying those views. As reported by Cairo the aide memoire stressed the U.S. belief that the Turco-Iraqi pact is a most desirable development, that the Arab League could not adequately provide for the defence of the Middle East, that the Arab countries should realise the vital importance of such defence and that the present Syrian attitude to the pact, and particularly to Iraqi participation in it, was inimical to the best interests of the area. It was also urged that Syria should not go so far in attacking the pact as to preclude any possibility of herself being eventually associated with regional defence in the Middle East, whether through the Turco-Iraqi Pact or otherwise. Allen said the U.S. was not taking a "tough" line with the Syrians (which was somewhat alien to their technique), but was making it clear what it thought of the Egyptian-sponsored move to turn the Arabs against the West and isolate Iraq.

4. Allen also indicated that the U.S. was far from happy with the leftist, neutralist and anti-"imperialist" Government in Syria. However, he would not make any prediction regarding its chances of survival. It seems that the U.S. would be reluctant to use its influence in Syrian internal politics.

5. Allen spoke quite strongly of the efforts being made by the French to undermine the Turco-Iraqi Pact. He said they were encouraging all elements in Syria opposing the pact, even the Communists (though of course they denied this). France was determined to keep Syria out of Iraqi clutches. The U.S. had taken the matter up with the French both in Washington and Paris, but so far without effect. The basic reason for the French attitude appeared to be their fear of exclusion from Anglo-American strategy-making in the Middle East, with the consequent threat to the "présence française" in the region. France might be ready to change her attitude if she were invited to join the Turco-Iraqi Pact before Syria, but this was unlikely since Iraq would not want France in the pact. The State Department had no confirmation of a press report that Turkey had invited France to join it. Allen added that not only was France thus encouraging the "dissident" Arabs, but she was also playing the other side of the street, by acting as a champion of Israel. There appeared to be strong Zionist influences in the French Government.

1. Mr Mc Millan

2. Mr. [unclear]

Copy on 18/6/55 J. G. 1/6. C.S.

6. Allen said that the latest development in this complicated situation is that the Turks have been getting "rough" with the Syrians over the last few days. This is in reply to constant Syrian and Egyptian attacks on Turkey, and, in Allen's view, is amply justified. However, it is causing some concern in the State Department lest it serve to drive Syria more firmly into the Egyptian camp. Allen said he personally feels it will probably do more good than harm.

I don't understand this
7. Allen said that Lebanon and Jordan are now apparently determined not to become involved with Egypt. Thus, since Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are too rigidly committed to their neutralist line to be influenced away from it, the net result is that most of the pressure from both sides is currently being directed at Syria.

W. K. Flanagan

(W. K. Flanagan)
Third Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

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DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

31 MAR 1955

23rd March, 1955.

CONFIDENTIAL

DESPATCH NO. 10/55

FROM: The Australian Minister to Egypt.

SUBJECT: Syria's Second Thoughts.

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to my Despatch No. 9 of 16th March in which I noted signs that Syria had lost some of its first enthusiasm for the so-called Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian triangle, and went on to suggest several reasons why the Government might be getting cold feet in pursuit of its pro-Egyptian policy. The events of the intervening week have further indicated that it is busy seeking ways and means of retracing its earlier impetuous steps.

2. Foremost among these indications was the decision of the Syrian Foreign Minister, Khaled el-Azm, to prolong his stay in Baghdad by three days. During these, he and his colleagues had further long conferences with the Iraqi leaders and were ultimately received by King Faisal. I am told by the Iraqi Ambassador in Cairo that his Government was well satisfied with the way the talks developed. Certainly the joint communique which was issued on 19th March at their termination, and a copy of which constitutes Annex "A" of this Despatch, must have made very unwelcome reading to the Egyptian Army Regime. It stressed the fraternal sentiments of Syria and Iraq towards all Arab countries, but particularly towards one another, and went on to say that the Iraqi leaders had explained their foreign policy and their relations with neighbouring and friendly countries while affirming that they had been, and still are, placing the interests of Arab countries and their safety above everything else. The Syrian delegation, for its part, left "fully acquainted with the Iraqi standpoint, and promised to submit it to the Syrian Government, together with its views as to the steps which should be taken to unify Arab ranks and to bring about the desired good understanding between the Arab countries."

3. The impression conveyed by this communique that Syria is now intent on avoiding a split with Iraq and the creation of two exclusive defence blocs in the Middle East, was further heightened by the action of el-Azm in hastening to Beirut immediately after he left Baghdad. There he had further talks with the Lebanese President, M. Camille Shamoun, whose sympathy with the Turco-Iraqi Pact is well known and who has himself been at pains to prevent any rupture between Iraq and the other Arab States. The Lebanese Prime Minister, Sami el-Solh, took part in these talks. President Shamoun has now left Lebanon to pay State visits to Italy and Turkey respectively. These will occupy him for the next fortnight, and it is understood that when he reaches Ankara he will be joined by Sami el-Solh. His decision not to postpone his visit to Turkey provides as clear an intimation as one could wish that Lebanon has no intention of joining any Arab Pact directed against her or her new ally, Iraq.

CONFIDENTIAL

/ 4. My Swedish

1. Mr. M. M. M.
2. Mr. P. P.

Distributed to:
Minister
Secretary
A/S G.R.

D L
Dyest

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4. My Swedish colleague, who is also accredited to Syria and has just returned from a visit to Damascus, tells me that the Syrian Ministers with whom he talked emphasized the close traditional ties between Syria and Iraq and their unwillingness to see any breach occur between the two countries. It was further pointed out to him that the joint declaration which Major Salah Salem persuaded the Syrian Government to sign on 6th March (as reported in our Memorandum No. 166 of 10th March) was merely a statement of principles, and that Syria would need to be satisfied that the text of the projected pact was compatible with her own concept of Arab unity. My Swedish colleague also gained the strong impression that, while the Syrian Army accepted the theory of a Joint Arab Command, it was definitely opposed to an Egyptian Commander-in-Chief, and was even more hostile to the suggestion that token Egyptian forces should be sent to Syria. On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that the Egyptians would agree to a Joint Command which they did not, in fact, dominate, and their claim to provide the Commander-in-Chief would be very hard to resist on practical grounds. Not merely is the Egyptian Army considerably bigger than those of all the other Arab States put together, but Egypt is the only country possessing a Staff College and officers trained along modern lines.

5. Parallel with, and undoubtedly caused by, the cooling enthusiasm of the Syrian Government for Salah Salem's original proposals, Egypt has been showing signs of veering towards a more moderate policy during the past week. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sami Aboud Fetouh, told me yesterday that the draft for the proposed pact, which has now been completed in Cairo for submission to Syria and Saudi Arabia, is both more general and less exclusive in its terms than what was implied in the joint statement of intentions. He hinted that it would even leave the door open for ultimate co-operation with the signatories of the Turco-Iraqi Pact, and thus to the eventual achievement of a unified defence system for the Middle East. I am told by my Iraqi colleague that in his talks with the Egyptians over the past few days they have adopted a much more conciliatory tone. The truth probably is that they have become frightened lest the Syrians will walk out on them, leaving Egypt in an even more humiliating position than when the conference of Arab Prime Ministers, held in Cairo in January, refused to join her in condemning Iraq for concluding a defence pact with Turkey.

6. Already the Egyptian timetable has been badly upset. It had been announced that a further conference of Arab Prime Ministers would meet in Cairo on 20th March in order to conclude the proposed new Arab Pact. This has had to be postponed while the Syrian Government makes up its mind as to how far it is now prepared to accompany Egypt down the road which Salah Salem so enthusiastically chartered. El-Azm is expected to visit Cairo within the next few days for further talks with the Egyptian Government, and upon the results of these will depend when, and in what form, a new meeting of Arab Prime Ministers will take place. Sami Aboud Fetouh gave me to understand that, in order to avoid further rebuffs, only the Prime Ministers of Syria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen would be invited to attend. This truncated conference will probably take place before the end of the month, and doubtless agreement will be reached upon a pact of sorts, since failure to produce anything at all would make Egypt the laughing-stock of the Arab world. But its text is now likely to be inoffensive and little more than a restatement of decisions already taken within the Arab League or implicit in the Arab Collective Security Pact. Moreover, the strong probability is that these will be left undisturbed and that Iraq will still remain an active member of both.

7. Meanwhile, despite the improvement in the French attitude reported in my last Despatch of 16th March, France does not seem to have modified her opposition to the Turco-Iraqi Pact. Following reports that the French Foreign Minister, M. Antoine Pinay, had

CONFIDENTIAL
said that

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

CONFIDENTIAL

said that France was considering joining the Pact on the invitation of Turkey, the Cairo press carried a statement said to have been issued by the Quai d'Orsay which not merely denied this, but went on to restate the French attitude towards Middle East defence. A copy of this statement is attached to this Despatch as Appendix "B". It will be seen that this redefinition differs a little from the statement of the French attitude given me by the French Charge d'Affaires here three weeks ago, and reported in paragraph 7 of my Despatch No. 8 of 2nd March. The reference to French concern for "the independence and the sovereignty" of the various Arab States interested in the defence of the Middle East will be generally read, especially in the Arab world, as an indirect insinuation that the Turco-Iraqi Pact aims at the unification of the Fertile Crescent under Iraqi hegemony. It was the instillation of this fear into the minds of the Syrian Government, with the seed suitably fertilised monetarily, that originally swung Syria into the arms of Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

8. The tension in Turco-Syrian relations which was reported in paragraph 5 of my despatch under reference has intensified during the past week. The Syrian reply to the second Turkish Note, though apparently conciliatory in character and carrying assurances that the proposed Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian Pact was in no way directed against Turkey, was brusquely rejected by the Turkish Prime Minister who is said to have handed it back to the Syrian Ambassador with the comment that its statements were not in accordance with the truth. This led to hurried meetings in Damascus between el-Azm and the Ambassadors of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Jordan, following which the Syrian Foreign Minister consulted with the British, American and French Ambassadors. A communique was subsequently issued by the Syrian Government on 22nd March expressing its "astonishment" at the manner in which the Turkish Prime Minister had expressed his Government's attitude towards the Syrian memorandum. The communique went on to express disquiet at the wrong interpretations placed upon Syrian policy and recalled that the Syrian Government had repeatedly expressed its determination to maintain normal relations with Turkey and did not harbour any aggressive intentions towards her. In restating the Syrian position, it described this as being dictated by a determination to assure the security of Syria and the Arab community, and as being inspired by the Charter of the United Nations which favours collective defence systems. Meanwhile, reports in the Syrian press that Turkish troops have been concentrated on the Syrian frontier, while probably without any solid foundation, are not helping to ease the tension which one Turkish newspaper has described as greater than any which has hitherto arisen since Syria became an independent State.

9. A copy of this Despatch is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

Sgd. H. A. McCLURE-SMITH

(H. A. McClure-Smith)
MINISTER

The Rt. Hon. E. G. Casey, C.H., D.S.O., M.C., M.P.,
Minister of State for External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

CONFIDENTIAL

JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AFTER IRAQI-SYRIAN TALKS

In the period from 14th March to 18th March, 1955, contacts and talks took place between the Syrian delegation led by El Sayed Khaled El-Asen, and Iraqi Government officials headed by Premier Nuri El-Said. They exchanged views on all Arab affairs with complete frankness and good faith.

The Syrian side expressed its sincere fraternal sentiments towards Iraq and all the other Arab countries, and its firm desire that understanding and agreement should prevail among them in preservation of supreme Arab interests.

The Iraqi side, in turn, expressed its appreciation of these noble sentiments and its brotherly feelings towards the Arab countries, particularly Syria which is tied to Iraq by neighbourly relations and close interests.

The Iraqi side explained its foreign policy and its relations with neighbouring and friendly countries. It affirmed that it has been and still is placing the interests of Arab countries and their safety above everything else.

It also emphasised its strict adherence to the Arab League Charter and the Arab Joint Defence (Collective Security) Treaty.

The Syrian side took note of Iraqi views and received the clarifications it requested. It was fully acquainted with the Iraqi standpoint and promised to submit it to the Syrian Government together with its (the delegation's) views as to the steps that should be taken to unify Arab ranks and to bring about desired good understanding among the Arab countries.

The two sides hope that sustained efforts will be made towards this end in order that combined action may succeed and that the Arab Commonwealth of nations may emerge stronger than it has been hitherto.

PARIS (Reuter)

The Quai d'Orsay yesterday evening published a communiqué stating that "the words attributed to M. Pinay on the subject of France's adhesion to the Turco-Iraqi Pact as well as the commentaries accompanying them do not correspond with the truth."

"M. Pinay stressed that the French Government, desiring to see the defence of the Middle East organised and sharing the concern of its allied governments on this question, is, at the same time, anxious on the subject of the maintenance of peace and equilibrium in that part of the world, and on the subject of the independence and the sovereignty of the various interested States.

"It is in this spirit that the Government continues to exert all its efforts towards relaxing the tension and bringing together the opposing points of view".

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper.....**SUMMARY OF WORLD BROADCASTS**.....
Published at.....

File No.....**181/2/4**.....
Date.....**March 25 H. 1955**.....

EGYPT.

A.F.M.E.

"THE VOICE OF THE ARABS" ON THE TURKISH-IRAQI PACT

Afme
Egypt's new pact "not directed against Iraq" The following are passages from a commentary by Maurice Arqash broadcast in Cairo radio's "Voice of the Arabs" on 21st March:

The Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi pact is not directed against Iraq; it aims at the co-ordination of Arab efforts. As the Turkish-Iraqi Pact has not yet become final, matters could still be restored to their former normal footing. Egypt's endeavours to put an end to Israel's expansionist ambitions are in the interests of the Arabs, and so are her efforts for a unified Arab army and military command. The Iraqi Government took a different course, on the grounds that it feared the danger of Russia and the Kurds on Iraq's northern frontiers. It has forgotten that the real danger is Israel. Furthermore, the Ankara-Baghdad pact is not one of equal partners, for while Turkey is a strong and united country, Iraq, as her rulers admit, is divided and weak. The Turkish-Iraqi Pact is therefore between the strong and the weak, and the strong always enslaves the weak. The Arabs must unite, for by their unity they can become a strong ally. (Cairo in Arabic: "Voice of the Arabs" 21.3.55)

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper... *The London Times*

File No... *181/2/4*

Published at... *London*

Date... *22nd March, 1956*

**TURKISH DISLIKE OF
SYRIA-EGYPT PACT**

"VALUELESS ARGUMENTS"

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

ISTANBUL, MARCH 21

The Turkish Government is of opinion that the assurances given by Syria in respect of the intended pact between that country and Egypt are not sincere. The Syrians have asserted that their pact with Egypt has no other object than defence against Israel, and they even go so far as to state that the Syria-Egypt pact might later be coordinated with the Turkey-Iraq pact. Turkey is convinced that these arguments are valueless, and that the main reason that prompts Egypt and Syria in signing a pact is to isolate Iraq and thwart the efforts that are being made for the defence of the Middle East.

The crisis in Turco-Syrian relations has been foreshadowed in the recent exchange of Notes, and it reached a climax yesterday when the Turkish Prime Minister, Mr. Menderes, received the Syrian Minister in Ankara and informed him that the last reply given by the Syrian Government to the Turkish Note could not be accepted and that consequently the relations between the two countries had entered a most serious phase. As Turkey is determined to proceed along the road that she has chosen, she considers the active opposition of Syria to be an unfriendly act which acquires additional gravity by the fact that Syria has a long common frontier with Turkey. In official circles in Ankara the hope is expressed that the Syrian Government will realize its mistake before it is too late.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

SECRET

:ABK

I. 4104.

Dated: 28th March 1955.
1738.

Rec'd: 29th March 1955.
0830.

FROM:

Australian Legation,
CAIRO.

52. SECRET.

Egypt, internal.

**ACTION
COPY**

I have been secretly informed by the Governor of the National Bank of Egypt, which is both a Bank of issue and a Trading Bank that the Government intends to take control of it shortly. The Directors meeting on 29th March will probably be informed of the decision.

2. The way has already been paved by the new amendments to Company Law, requiring that the Directors should retire at sixty, unless Cabinet consents to their retention; our Memorandum 192. Almost three quarters of the Directors of the National Bank are over sixty.

3. The Chairman of the Bank Ali Shamsy, is seeking immediate interview with Nassar in the hope of staying the Government's hand, but the interview has not yet been granted. I understand the Minister of Commerce has tried unavailingly to dissuade the Government. Enforcement of the mass retirement of the Directors will bring with it the Governor's resignation.

4. If the Government's intentions are carried out, shocks administered to the confidence of the financial and business community will be severe. The effect on foreign investments in Egypt is also likely to be serious, particularly if Government control, open or veiled, is extended to major industrial enterprises. The new Company Law makes this relatively easy.

5. The domestic outlook is generally less reassuring than at the beginning of the year. The regime's diplomatic reverses have lowered its prestige, and it would not be surprising if the Foreign Office tried to regain lost ground by dramatic moves at home. There are ominous signs of growing labour discontent and Communist infiltration of the Unions. Among the business leaders there is a growing anxiety and fear of undefined development endangering their stakes in the country.

6. The Arab League Council met at Cairo on schedule yesterday, 27th March, without being preceded by the much trumpeted meeting of Arab Prime Ministers, which the regime had declared would take place first to sign the new Arab pact. Even the visit of El AZH originally planned for a week ago is still pending.

McClure Smith.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
TREASURER & TREASURY.
P.M.'S.

29th March 1955.

SEC AS(DIV1) AS(DIV2) MR.HOOD UN ER PAC&AM AM&SP
S&SEA E.A.F&ME E AF&ME@ INF DL C&P
G

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SAVINGRAM.

CONFIDENTIAL

I.3929

:CEB

Dated: 18th March, 1955.

Rec'd: 24th March, 1955.
1040

FROM:

Australian High Commission,
L O N D O NSAV. E.A. 13. CONFIDENTIAL

Representations in Syria.

As you know, the United States Embassy in Syria earlier this month presented a stiff Note bearing on the Syrian reaction to the Turco-Iraqi Pact. The Americans are concerned at the leftward and neutralist trend of the present Syrian Government and have been considering what they might do to arrest this drift. Their Ambassador in Damascus has reported that pro-Western elements still have considerable strength in the country but that they are afraid to move for fear of the Army's intervention. He has suggested, as a help towards restoring their freedom of Parliamentary manoeuvre, that he should be authorised to let it be known in political circles in Damascus that recognition by the United States of a Leftist Government, if established by violence or by military pressure, would not be automatic. The British Ambassador in Washington reported that the State Department was favourably inclined towards this proposal.

2. The Foreign Office have now sent comments to Washington to the effect that they are equally concerned about the situation in Syria and are prepared to make the strongest representations, but they do not believe that the United States Ambassador's suggestion would be effective. They agree with the comments of the British Ambassador in Damascus that the effect of threats of non-recognition might be the opposite of the one desired, as the Syrians resent threats and react sharply. In any case, they say, it is not United Kingdom practice to use recognition as a political weapon but to recognise a new Government as soon as it has, in fact, gained control and appears likely to remain in power.

24th March, 1955.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE
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F 181/2/4

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper.....

File No. 181/2/4.

Published at.....

Date 22nd March, 1955

EXTRACTION OF
RECORDS

E G Y P T

The drafting of the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi pact On 16th March a committee headed by Maj. Salah Salim began the drafting of the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi agreement. The draft was to be submitted to the meeting of Arab Premiers in Cairo (ANA 16.3.55). On 19th March Maj. Salah Salim said that the committee had finished its work, and the pact was now complete in all details, political, military and economic. In reply to a question about the Arab Premiers' meeting, Maj. Salah Salim said that it had been postponed owing to the extension of the Syrian delegation's visit to Baghdad. (Cairo 15.00 and "Voice of the Arabs" 17.00, 19.3.55)

AP-NE

22 MAR 1955

CANBERRA.

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S.4/4/1

16th March, 1955

DESPATCH NO. 9/55

FROM: The Australian Minister to Egypt

SUBJECT: Egypt's Drive for Arab Hegemony

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to my Despatch No. 8 of 2nd March in which I reported that Egypt was trying to cover up her diplomatic defeat over the Turco-Iraqi Pact by endeavouring to secure the adherence of the other Arab States to a new Arab Security Pact from which Iraq would be excluded. It was subsequently reported in our Memorandum No. 166 of 10th March that, following Major Salah Salem's visit to Damascus, Egypt and her one constant supporter, Saudi Arabia, had succeeded in persuading the Syrian Government to join in signing a statement expressing the complete agreement of the three countries as to the steps which should be taken to "strengthen the Arab structure, politically, militarily and economically." These fell into three groups: first, the establishment of a new Arab organisation for defence co-operation, based on the setting up of a permanent Joint Command; second, the refusal of each of the new organisations's members, not merely to participate in the Turco-Iraqi Pact, but also to conclude any international military or political agreements without the consent of other members; third, the establishment of an Arab Economic Council and the development of economic co-operation, along other lines, which have, in fact, long been agreed upon in principle by the existing Arab League.

2. Since his return to Cairo on 7th March, Salah Salem and the Egyptian press which he controls have been assiduously trying to give an air of reality to these proposals, but without much success. Not only is Egypt the only one of the three countries possessing anything which could remotely be called an Army, but none of the three have contiguous frontiers. Nor have they any close trade ties, such as those which link Egypt and Lebanon. The Syrian Government rests on nothing more than a very tenuous parliamentary majority composed of extreme opposites. As such it hardly provides a firm foundation for international agreement.

3. To offset these embarrassing facts the Egyptian propagandists have been implying that Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria will soon secure the adherence of Jordan, Lebanon, and the other Arab States to their proposals. At present, at least, all the indications point in the opposite direction. As reported in our Memorandum No. 166, both the members of the Lebanese Cabinet and the fifteen-man Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee are understood to have recorded their opposition to any policy which would isolate Iraq. Indeed, there is little doubt that Lebanon would like to adhere to the Turco-Iraqi Pact if she could do so without calling down reprisals from Egypt on her head. It is significant that, despite several statements from Syrian and Egyptian sources to the contrary, the Lebanese Govern-

M. M. Nathan
M. P. P.
D. H. P.
Minister
Secretary
Under
21
Dykes

Extra copies being obtained for 18/1/3
17/2/12
16/3/13

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ment refused to appoint a representative to accompany the Syrian Foreign Minister, Khalid el-Asm, on his present mission to Baghdad, a mission ostensibly designed "to explain" the purposes and virtues of the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian proposals for a new Arab Pact. As for Jordan, as the memorandum under reference indicated, her Government has made it clear that it cannot associate itself with the new proposals.

4. There are signs, indeed, that the Syrian Government itself has lost some of its first enthusiasm for the so-called Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian triangle. Before leaving for Baghdad on 14th March, El-Asm issued a remarkably conciliatory statement stressing the fact that the proposed Pact was in no way aimed against Iraq or intended to isolate her. He went on to admit that Iraq's geographical position might have provided justification for her own Pact with Turkey, and went on to suggest the possibility of ultimate co-operation between the two defence systems which he claimed were emerging in the Middle East. The first reports of his subsequent talks in Baghdad, in which the Syrian Chief of Staff joined, do not suggest, however, that a reconciliation was brought any closer by them, and it is understood that el-Asm is returning to Damascus forthwith.

5. If the Syrian Government is beginning to get cold feet in the pursuit of its present policy, several reasons for this can be suggested. In the first place, neither Egypt nor Saudi Arabia are popular in Syria, and official relations, particularly between Damascus and Cairo were very strained until the new Syrian Government took office. On the other hand, the ties between Syria and Iraq have always been close. Consequently there has been little public support, except from the left-wing, for a policy which draws Syria away from Iraq into the arms of Egypt. Secondly, Turkey has reacted strongly against the proposed Arab Pact which Syria is sponsoring, and has made her feelings known to Damascus in two sharply worded Notes. These have pointed out that any such attempt to debar Arab countries from entering into any agreement with non-Arab countries constitutes a direct challenge to the Turco-Iraqi Pact, while, at the same time, imposing a limitation on the exercise of the former's sovereign rights. Syria has been reminded that she has a long common frontier with Turkey and that the continued pursuit of an anti-Turkish policy would give reason for deep concern about the future development of Turkish-Syrian relations. It is unlikely that subsequent declarations by el-Asm that Syria's agreement with Egypt is in no way directed against Turkey will be accepted in Ankara.

6. Another development calculated to give the Syrian Government pause has been the change in the attitude of France. Under considerable pressure from London and Washington, the Quai d'Orsay has now replaced its original instructions to its Ambassadors in Arab countries (as reported in paragraph 7 of my Despatch No. 8/55 of 2nd March) to oppose the Turco-Iraqi Pact. While still not coming out in favour of it, I understand that the French Embassies in Damascus and Cairo have now been instructed to deprecate the attempt to create a new exclusive Arab organisation opposed to all defence arrangements with outside countries and at the same time isolating Iraq. This switch in French policy must have been highly disconcerting to the Syrian Government, particularly coming at a time when its own calmer second thoughts are probably leading it to the conclusion that there is little profit for Syria in helping Egypt pull her chestnuts out of the fire of her own creation.

7. Short of a change of Government, Syria would find it much harder, however, to retreat from the Egyptian embrace than it was to accept it in the first place - along with the Saudi gold which went with it. Far from relaxing its counter offensive against Iraq, the Egyptian Government is, if anything, showing signs of stepping it up.

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/ In paragraph 7

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In paragraph 7 of our Memorandum No. 166 of 10th March it was reported that the British Ambassador, after a meeting with the Prime Minister, Lt.-Col. Gamal Abdul Nasser, which took place at the latter's request, had sought instructions for a reply to Nasser's suggestion that the United Kingdom might possibly become the co-ordinating link between the two defence systems which were developing in the Middle East - his reference being to the Turco-Iraqi Pact on the one hand, and his own agreement with Syria and Saudi Arabia on the other. The instructions subsequently received stated that, while it was most desirable to avoid a head-on collision, the fact that the projected Pact sponsored by Egypt precluded any co-operation with the West made it impossible for the United Kingdom to assume the role suggested by Nasser. Moreover, any suggestion that the proposed Arab Pact might form a satisfactory complement to the Turco-Iraqi Pact would be calculated to undermine Lebanese and Jordanian resistance to Egyptian pressure, and for this reason alone could not be accepted.

8. The Ambassador saw Nasser for a second time on 14th March in order to convey to him the British answer to his earlier exposition. On this occasion the Prime Minister appeared to adopt a much harder attitude than at the first meeting. Starting on an entirely new line, he expressed the conviction that Nuri's policy was aimed at isolating Egypt and returning to his 1942 concept of an Arab League from which she was excluded. The current Egyptian political manoeuvres were therefore aimed at turning the tables on Nuri. Nasser admitted that he was concentrating on Syria for the present, and professed himself content at Lebanon remaining outside both Pacts for the time being. He added ominously, however, that he foresaw the possibility of exerting economic pressure on Lebanon at a later stage. Jordan he dismissed as being ineligible to join the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian agreement because of her ties with the United Kingdom. At the same time, he warned that were either Lebanon or Jordan to join the Turco-Iraqi Pact, Egypt's attitude towards them would be gravely affected, and it was likely that Egyptian propaganda would be directed to their peoples over the heads of the Governments. In reply to this threat, the British Ambassador stressed the unforeseeable dangers in Egypt embarking on such a course.

9. At this point, Nasser became rather less belligerent and stated that if the present temperature lowered, he would hope for a state of peaceful co-existence between the two blocs. Although no overt link between them in the immediate future would be practical, means of co-operation might eventually emerge. "My main objective," he said, with what appeared to be strong conviction, "remains the organisation of the defence of the whole area." And he went on to say if Jordan did not join the Turco-Iraqi Pact it might be possible for a link between the two blocs to be found through her and the United Kingdom. In any case, he hoped that the Arab League would continue in existence, though he was undecided about the future of the Arab Collective Security Pact.

10. In his first talk with the new American Ambassador, Mr. Henry Byroade, a few days earlier, the Prime Minister adopted much the same attitude. On this occasion he declared that Nuri was motivated by hopes of achieving the federation of the Fertile Crescent under the Iraqi hegemony. He stated, without amplification, that the agreement with Syria would involve Egypt in substantial commitments, although he made it clear that no Egyptian troops would be stationed in Syria. However, he thought that the unified Army would be the most effective counter to Iraqi ambitions. When reminded by Mr. Byroade of the weakness of the Syrian Government and the state of the parties in the country, Nasser declared that if the politicians did not toe the line the Army could be expected to make the right moves. I understand that he even suggested the eventual emergence of a body similar to the Revolution Command Council in Egypt.

/ 11. Finally

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11. Finally, he underlined the essential anti-Iraqi basis of his policy by the surprising statement that it was not desirable for Lebanon or Jordan to become parties to the new Pact which Egypt was sponsoring since they, unlike Syria, had long and vulnerable frontiers with Israel. This revealing declaration constitutes telling comment upon the efforts of Salah Salem and the Egyptian press to present Egypt in the light of the protector of the Arab world against Israel in contrast to Iraq which was covertly preparing to negotiate with Israel through the good offices of Turkey.

12. So far as can be judged from here, Nuri is treating the present Egyptian manoeuvres with a mixture of indifference and contempt, while at the same time pressing ahead with his own plans. The visit of the Shah to Baghdad on 12th March was made the occasion for stressing the cordiality of Iraqi-Persian relations, and there is no doubt that the opportunity was seized for discussing Persia's ultimate adherence to the Turco-Iraqi Pact. I am told by the Iraqi Ambassador in Cairo that the Shah will make another visit to Baghdad in mid-April, during which Nuri hopes to have a defence agreement between the two countries signed. It is also hoped that similar arrangements will be negotiated with Pakistan before long. Despite all the efforts of Egyptian propaganda to stir up popular feeling against him, there is nothing to indicate that Nuri is any less firmly in the saddle than he was when he originally negotiated the Turco-Iraqi Pact. The chief weakness in the Iraqi position would seem to lie in the precarious health of the Prime Minister and not in his political strength.

13. A copy of this Despatch is being forwarded to the External Affairs Officer, London.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

Gen. H. A. McClure-Smith

(H. A. McClure-Smith)
MINISTER

The Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey, C.B., D.S.O., M.C., M.P.,
Minister of State for External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.G.T.

SECRET



CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

In reply quote No. S.12/5/1

Memo No. 179

21 MAR 1955
181/2/4
CANBERRA.AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
CAIRO.

17th March, 1955.

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA.

CONFIDENTIAL AND GUARD.

UNITED STATES MEMORANDUM ON MIDDLE EAST POLICY.

I refer to our Memorandum No. 158 of the 9th March, concerning the Note presented by the United States Ambassador in Syria to the Syrian Government.

2. I enclose herewith a copy of the State Department Memorandum of the 26th February sent to all United States posts in the Middle East and on which the Note to the Syrian Government was based. This copy has been made available to us by the British Embassy, Cairo.

3. As a result of the "leak" of the contents of the United States Note and similar "leaks" concerning Notes which have recently been presented by the British and Turkish Ambassadors in Damascus, the three Heads of Mission have decided that in future they will make only verbal representations to the Syrian Government.

7. The development of defence arrangements and an improvement in Arab-Israeli relations are essential to an effective contribution to Middle East area defence. The United States will contribute its resources in unco-ordinated forces within an Arab-Israeli area force.

(H.D. WHITE)
Secretary.

8. The United States will support the welfare of the Arab states. The Arab Collective Security Pact, however, does not, in the opinion of the United States, meet area needs for an effective defence organisation, either as a point of internal strength or from that of ability to secure effective defence from neighbouring countries. The Department of State will not support at any time for the Arab Collective Security Pact nor for any similar successor organisations.

9. Possible United States military assistance to Egypt might be construed as an exception to Paragraph 10. However, it should be noted that Egypt is already linked to the West by way of the Anglo-Egyptian Suez Base agreement; and any military assistance to Egypt would be designed to strengthen the defence of the Suez Base. Any military assistance to Egypt will, of course, be subject to the normal agreements with Egyptian guarantees against aggressive use of equipment and its assistance of co-operation for collective defence.

10. The United States can give no advice as to courses chosen by individual Arab states regarding Arab defence policy. Each Arab state should determine the course in light of its own interests. The United States hopes, however, that Syria will not associate with any efforts to make things more difficult for Iraq and that Syria will not go on to leave open the possibility of the future association with the Arab League defence organisation.

CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL AND GUARD

February 26, 1955.

1. The United States has always supported the efforts of other states in co-operative undertakings designed to achieve greater degree stability and security. In particular, the United States has favoured collaboration between states interested in developing Middle Eastern defence against Communist aggression.
2. The United States welcomes the Turko-Iraqi accord as a constructive step in recognition of the need for effective Middle Eastern defence against Communist expansion.
3. The United States is prepared to help Turkish and Iraqi efforts toward effective defence arrangements.
4. The United States believes that the Arab states should welcome as a measure contributing to their own security, the Turko-Iraqi accord.
5. The Department of State has publicly welcomed the Turko-Iraqi agreement as a constructive step toward a realistic defence organisation which might eventually include Pakistan, Iran, and certain Arab states.
6. After further development of an organisation, along the lines of the recent agreement, the United States foresees the possibility that Arab states in the "rear area" behind "northern tier" could play a useful role in relation to defence organisation. In these circumstances, if one of the Arab states in the "rear area" desired to associate itself with the defence organisation, the United States would be disposed to consider strengthening the defence of that Arab state, or of any Arab state including Egypt, desiring to participate in realistic Middle East defence plans.
7. The development of defence arrangements and an improvement in Arab-Israel relations are essential to an effective United States contribution to Middle East area defence. The United States cannot dissipate its resources in unco-ordinated forces within the area nor in an Arab-Israeli arms race.
8. The United States recognises the value of the Arab League in contributing to the economic, technical, and social welfare of the Arab states. The Arab Collective Security Pact, however, does not, in the opinion of the United States Government, meet area needs for an effective defence organisation, either from the point of view of internal strength nor from that of ability to secure effective support from neighbouring countries. The Department of State foresees no United States Government support at any time for the Arab Collective Security Pact nor for any similar successor organisations.
9. Possible United States military assistance to Egypt might be construed as an exception to Paragraph 7 above. However, it should be noted that Egypt is already linked to the West by way of the Anglo-Egyptian Suez Base agreement; and any military assistance to Egypt would be designed to strengthen the defence of the Suez Base. Any military assistance to Egypt will, of course, be subject to the normal agreements, with Egyptian guarantees against aggressive use of equipment and its assurance of co-operation for collective defence.
10. The United States can give no advice as to courses chosen by individual Arab states regarding Arab defence policy. Each Arab state should determine its course in light of its own best interests. The United States hopes, however, that Syria will not associate self with any effort to make things more difficult for Iraq and that Syria will act so as to leave open the possibility of its future association with the developing defence organisation.

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181/2/4.
CONFIDENTIAL

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

Memo No. 176



Box 273

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
CAIRO.

17th March, 1955.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

MIDDLE EAST DEFENCE

I refer to paragraph 9 of our Memorandum No. 166 of 10th March, regarding the proposed Syrian-Lebanese mission to Baghdad the purpose of which would be to explain the principles of the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian Agreement.

2. According to Egyptian press conjecture the Iraqi Government will be asked to clarify the following points:-

- (i) The extent of truth in the reports that the Turco-Iraqi Pact gave Iraq a free hand on her border with Syria and gave Turkey a free hand in the area bordering on Aleppo.
- (ii) Did the Turco-Iraqi Pact include secret annexes?
- (iii) Iraqis' attitude in regard to Turco-Israeli relations. Do these relations entail any obligations on the part of Iraq?
- (iv) An Iraqi pledge that the Turco-Iraqi Pact would not lead to a peace settlement between Iraq and Israel.
- (v) Assurances that the Iraqi government will respect the United Nations resolutions on Palestine.

(These are all Egyptian-inspired arguments already used in the press campaign against the Turco-Iraqi Pact.)

3. If these points are an indication of the tenor of the talks they would serve to reinforce the view that they were foredoomed to failure. On the other hand they may justify the view that the Syrians would not be reluctant to be convinced of the justice of the Iraqi case. (Paragraph 4 of Despatch No. 9/55 refers.)

4. The Lebanese have continued to sit on the fence, but, although no member of their Government joined the mission, their Ambassador in Baghdad was instructed to take part in the talks, according to Egyptian reports.

5. A copy of this memorandum is being forwarded to the Australian Embassy, Washington, and the External Affairs Officer, London.

Mr. McArthur
Mr. T. J. [unclear]

H. D. White
(H.D. WHITE)
Secretary

Copy on 18/1/1/2

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SAVINGRAM.

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Lgram

I.3758/59

MK:CEB

Dated: 14th March, 1955.

2250

Rec'd: 21st March, 1955.

1600

FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON

SAV.49

CONFIDENTIAL

In discussion on March 9th Dixon, Political Military Advisor Near Eastern Affairs, expressed United States satisfaction with the Turkey-Iraq Pact, as indication of growing realisation by at least one Arab State that the threat to the Middle East comes from outside the area rather than from within (i.e. Israel), and as constructive step by Iraq towards the erection of a barrier against this threat. Dixon made the following specific comments concerning the implications of the pact.

Possible extension of the pact.

2. Other Arab States. Accession by other Arab States unlikely for the time being. Syria, once a potential candidate, has now moved strongly in the other direction following a change of government, and this would also make accession by Lebanon most difficult. Lebanon might, however, be kept out of the new Egyptian sponsored Arab Group. Jordan is the only other candidate, and probably she would remain outside both the Iraqi and Egyptian camps.
3. Iran. Iran regarded as likely to make regional defence arrangements "in the not too distant future" (the State Department has always been cautious about making exact predictions in the Middle East). The tone of the Iranian press and government statements indicate steady movement towards defence association with the West, and prospects now definitely "better than a year ago". Political desirability of Iranian association with the Turkey-Iraq Pact undeniable, and the United States hopes it would also prove militarily advantageous in the long run. At present, however, Iranian forces remain very weak, though United States training teams are making progress towards improving the efficiency of these forces. The best place to offer ground resistance to Soviet invasion would be in the passes of Iran. It is obviously desirable for Western Forces to have access to Iran before such a threat arises. Turkey and Pakistan are most anxious to bring Iran into the Security Agreement. The latest Soviet warning to Iran against association with "aggressive bloc" in the Middle East is only likely to annoy the Iranians.
4. United States. The United States is not thinking at present of accession to the pact. After experience with M.E.S., the United States has carefully avoided any suggestion of "sponsoring" Middle East Security System. United States policy is based on encouragement of indigenous alliances. The United States had made it clear to the Arabs that the pact is entirely the work of Nuri and Menderes, and the United States had only encouraged their initiative. (Despite this

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the Egyptians had promptly blamed the United States for the pact). The United States is anxious not to undermine the "native" character of the pact by joining at this stage.

5. United Kingdom. The United States thinks the United Kingdom will probably accede to the pact soon (c.f. Eden's statement to the Commons on March 8th). Although the United States recognises the United Kingdom has particular reasons for this (e.g. United Kingdom bases in Iraq and existing relations with Turkey and Iraq), it considers these United Kingdom interests could probably be fully protected under existing arrangements without actual accession to the pact. Moreover, United Kingdom accession would also tend to undermine the "native" character of the pact, though this effect would be much greater had the United Kingdom been an original signatory of the pact as was contemplated with M.E.D.O. (It was evident from Dixon's remarks that the United States is considerably less than enthusiastic about British accession before any other Middle East States have joined).

6. Generally the United States looks towards the broadening and completion of the northern tier structure. The Turkey-Iraq Pact is considered a better basis for the development of the northern tier than the Turkey-Pakistan Pact, and Pakistan may soon accede to the former. So far the pact is extremely vague, merely providing for "co-operation" in security and defence, but it may eventually be built into an effective security organisation.

7. Effect of Egyptian Counter Moves.

The United States is not particularly concerned at the Egyptian attempt to reconstitute the Arab League without Iraq. This could cause trouble, but at the present stage it seems unlikely that anything "substantial" will emerge from the Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia "Agreement" (in any case agreement to form a pact is in Arab circles a far cry from actual formation of such a pact. Nevertheless, the United States is taking precautions and has informed Lebanon that the new organisation cannot expect United States arms aid-- contrary to Egyptian statements to the effect that the United States was ready to give arms to the Arab Collective Security Pact before Nuri's agreement with Turkey. It seems unlikely that either Lebanon or Jordan will agree to any move resulting in the exclusion of Iraq from the Arab League. Even Syria's decision is not necessarily irrevocable.

8. The United States would be reluctant to predict the ultimate effect on the Arab League of the pact and the Egyptian counter move. (Iraq claims in the end the League will continue as before.) The United States, however, considers the pact has enhanced the prestige of Iraq and lowered that of Egypt's campaign against Nuri by the Egyptian press (which is inclined to believe it can bring down any Arab Government if it wishes) had failed completely, and Nuri's position is now stronger than ever. (The importance of Nuri to the continuance of Pro-West orientation of Iraq is fully recognised by the United States.) Furthermore, the Egyptian charge that Iraq had betrayed the Arab cause by turning her back on the Israel issue had become pretty unconvincing in the light of the exchange of letters between Nuri and Menderes agreeing to work for the implementation of United

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Nations Resolutions on Palestine. (This was only kept out of the main text of the pact at the urgent request of the United Kingdom and the United States.)

9. The United States still considers that Egypt's main objection to the pact is the threat to her "leadership" of the Arab world. Once Egypt can establish that its status is unaffected by the pact it may be inclined to follow a similar course to that of Iraq. With a view to such a possible reversal of policy the United States has urged Egypt to ^{show} restraint in its reaction to the pact, so that Leaders would not have gone too far in denunciation of outside alliances to be able to reverse their stand. Egypt had ignored this advice and "gone mad". This still does not entirely rule out the possibility of a later Egyptian switch particularly as persistence in their present policy could reduce the chances of the United States keeping its present military aid offer open. Egypt would find it difficult to get arms elsewhere.

10. Israel.

Israel is not regarded as in military danger from the Arabs however the internal struggle in the Arab League turns out. The Israeli Military Attache' in Washington, Colonel Salmon, has told Dixon that the Israelis could outnumber any Arab Forces in the field three or four to one. Salmon said that the Israelis were, however, worried lest the Arabs get excited and "start something" with consequent bloodshed. Allowing for patriotic exaggeration by Colonel Salmon, Dixon remarked that it is still clear that the Israelis are much stronger than the Arabs, militarily.

22nd March, 1955.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE
P.M's.

SECRET

In reply quote No. 118/10



DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

16 MAR 1955

CANBERRA

181/2/4
AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

7th March, 1955.

MEMORANDUM NO. 395/55

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra, A.C.T.

MIDDLE EAST ----- Egypt-Syria-Saudi Arabia Pact

1. The New York Times Cairo correspondent, Robert Doty, has reported the announcement in Cairo on March 6th of agreement between Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia to form a new organisation to unite the Arab world militarily and economically. This is the plan negotiated by Salah Salem in Damascus last week (see our memorandum 386 of 4th March).
2. The plan envisages a common Arab defence organisation, with a unified command and coordination of training and equipment of Arab armies. Members would be committed to defend any participating Arab State that is the victim of aggression, and would be bound not to join the Turkey-Iraq pact or any other such (military or economic) pact. Economic cooperation is designed to include a single currency for member states issued by a newly-created central bank, elimination or reduction of customs duties, and creation of Arab-financed agencies to develop agriculture, industry and sea and air transportation. The three countries concerned have urged other Arab States to send representatives to an Arab defence conference to be arranged at a later date.
3. This agreement is the most important fruit so far of the Egyptian campaign to draw the Arab States away from possible association with the Turkey-Iraq pact, and, in so doing, to isolate Iraq. (It is also described as a campaign to restore Arab unity). Salah Salem has been the energetic and ubiquitous instrument of this policy. The new organisation appears designed to replace the existing Arab League collective security pact, and possibly the Arab League itself.
4. Extracts from the New York Times and Washington Post of March 7th on this subject are attached for your information.

W. K. Flanagan
(W. K. Flanagan)
Third Secretary

Attn.

Mr. E. Chandler
Mr. [unclear]

CE

DEPT.
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SECRET

14 MAR 1955

10/2/4
CANBERRA.

Box 273

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
CAIRO.

In reply quote No. S.4/4/1

Memo No. 166

10th March, 1955

SECRET

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

TURCO-IRAQI PACT

In Ministerial Despatch No. 8/55 we reported Egyptian moves to enlist support for a new Arab Security Pact from which Iraq would be excluded.

2. The attached statements issued after talks in Damascus and Ryadh indicate that a large measure of success was achieved with both the Syrian and Saudi Arabian Governments, but this is not unexpected in view of the present political situation in the former country and the unwavering support which the latter has given to Egypt.

3. To give an air of reality to the proposed arrangements it was necessary to gain the adherence of other countries, and so the campaign has been carried to the Lebanon and Jordan, in which visits Salah Salem was joined by the Syrian Foreign Minister, Khaled el-Azm.

4. The Lebanese President appears still to support the Iraqi attitude, and it has been reported that all members of the Cabinet and of the fifteen-man Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee are opposed to a policy which would isolate Iraq. However, this view has not been made public, possibly as a result of the weakness of the Prime Minister, and no commitment has been made to either side.

5. It is likely that the Lebanese problem would have been resolved had Salah Salem achieved the easy success in Jordan as he had in Syria. It has been reported in the Egyptian press that the Jordanian Government supports the Egyptian policy, but it is clear that the Jordanian Prime Minister, Abul Hoda, in response to British persuasion, rejected Salah Salem's overtures. In his talks with Salah Salem and El-Azm, he stressed that he would be guided by the interests of Jordan and the facts of the present situation. He listed these facts as Jordan's close ties with Iraq, her Treaty with and financial dependence on the United Kingdom, and the resultant support she could expect from the United Kingdom in the event of Israeli aggression. Under these circumstances it was impossible for Jordan to divorce herself from her existing allies (he drew a contrast with the case of Syria who had no foreign commitments) for the sake of some possible alternative organisation which was as yet only in prospect. To make his refusal more palatable, he added that Jordan would, of course, continue to count on the moral and material support of her Arab neighbours, and that the proposals would be carefully studied and, if it seemed appropriate, they would be referred to Parliament.

6. A talk which the British Ambassador had had with Abul Hoda a few days before Salah Salem's arrival had led him to doubt the Prime Minister would adopt such a firm attitude, possibly, amongst other reasons,

Mr. E. G. G. G.

Mr. L. P. P. P.

/ because

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down 20/3/55

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- 2 -

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because he had received what he considered a peremptory request from Iraq for a statement of his views within two days. However, Salah Salem destroyed any advantage he may have gained from this fact by requesting immediate agreement to his proposals. Moreover, he may have guessed in advance the nature of his reception from the lack of enthusiastic demonstrations of welcome which he is reported to have been accorded in Damascus.

7. Possibly as an indication that the Egyptian Government has become a little unsure of its position Nassar recently had a discussion with the British Ambassador on the present situation. He made the point that since the United Kingdom now clearly regarded the Turco-Iraqi Pact as an accomplished fact, they should also regard the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi-Arabian Agreement equally as an accomplished fact. It might follow, therefore, that since the United Kingdom had ties with at least some members of the parties to both of these agreements, she could become the co-ordinating factor in the defence of the whole area. The Ambassador, who has requested instructions for a complete reply to this suggestion, pointed out to the Egyptian Prime Minister that the United Kingdom could not accept, nor even appear to accept by implication, any condemnation of Iraq. The Prime Minister stated that there was no question of Iraq's being condemned and that she would remain a member of the Arab League, but it is difficult to reconcile this statement with the press attacks on Iraq which have mounted in intensity since the incident in the Gaza area. It is significant, too, that the Egyptian press has not been permitted to report the Iraqi offer of assistance to Egypt in the event of further Israeli aggression.

8. It is reported that a meeting of the Prime Ministers and Chiefs of Staff of those Arab countries supporting the principles set out in the attachment will be held later this month, and the press has already reported that the Headquarters for the Joint Army will be in Damascus. It would be logical to expect the appointment of an Egyptian Commander-in-Chief of the joint force and, in fact, in answer to a question from the British Ambassador, Nassar stated that the scheme would be practicable only if the Army were under Egyptian control.

9. Major Salah Salem has now returned to Cairo where he was warmly welcomed by Nassar, although apparently a further attempt is to be made to make Iraq see the error of her ways, or perhaps to arrange some form of compromise, as it is planned that a joint Lebanese-Syrian Delegation should visit Baghdad. The visit was to have taken place on 10th March, but has been postponed until "the Syrian Government completes its study of the present situation in the Arab world." In any event, the mission seems foredoomed to failure, as the effect of the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi-Arabian talks can but have been to stiffen Iraqi resolution, reinforced as that now has been by a public statement by Menderes attacking Syria for yielding to Egyptian pressure in a manner unfriendly to a neighbouring country, Turkey.

10. Copies of this memorandum are being forwarded to the Australian Embassy, Washington, and the External Affairs Officer, London.

H.D. White
(H.D. WHITE)
Secretary

* A further indication of Lebanese wavering is given by a statement made on 9th March that their delegate to accompany el-Azm to Baghdad has not yet been chosen and that they may not send one.

SECRET

SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN JOINT STATEMENT

The Syrian and Egyptian sides met in Damascus between February 26 and March 1, 1955. Premier Sabry El-Assaly and El-Sayed Khaled El-Azem, Foreign Minister and Acting Minister of Defence, represented the Syrian side, while Major Salah Salem, Minister of National Guidance, represented the Egyptian side.

Since there is complete agreement between the Egyptian and Syrian Governments on foreign policy, both sides have conducted consultations on the present Arab situation and exchanged views on the means of strengthening the Arab structure politically, militarily and economically.

They have found that the following bases would ensure the achievement of these aims:

1. Non-participation in the Turco-Iraqi Pact, or any other Pact.
2. Establishment of an Arab organisation for joint defence and economic co-operation, based on the following points:
 - A. Obligation to take part in checking aggression on any member of the Organisation.
 - B. Establishment of a permanent Joint Command with headquarters, to supervise the training of all military forces placed by each country at its disposal, as well as their armaments, organisation, and deployment in accordance with the Joint Defence plans. The Command will also co-ordinate military industries, and communications required for military purposes.
 - C. No member of the Organisation shall conclude international military or political agreements without the consent of the other members.
 - D. Bolstering up the economies of the member states of the organisation preparatory to the achievement of overall economic unity.

The two sides sponsor the following propositions:

- (a) The establishment of an Arab Bank which would issue Arab currency. An expert Committee is to be formed to draw up a blueprint for this project preparatory to its implementation.
 - (b) Revision of the present system of commercial exchange with a view to strengthening it by exempting local products and manufactured goods from customs duties or reducing these duties to the lowest possible level.
 - (c) Encouraging the establishment of joint stock companies with joint Arab capital to undertake large-scale agricultural and industrial projects as well as aviation, maritime insurance, and other operations.
 - (d) Formation of an Arab Economic Council to direct and supervise this economic policy.
3. Contacts with Arab Governments to present the bases and principles set forth in this statement. Arab countries agreeing thereto are to be called to a conference to draw up the detailed text of the agreement for endorsement and implementation immediately after its conclusion.

The Conference is to be held during the month of March, 1955, and should include Premiers, Foreign, Defence and Finance Ministers and Chiefs of the General Staff.

SAUDI-ARABIAN-SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN JOINT STATEMENT

On Saturday, 5th March, 1955, a meeting was held at Riyadh under the chairmanship of H.M. King Saud. It was attended by R.H.R. Prince Feisal, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, El-Sayed Khaled El-Azem, Syrian Foreign Minister and Acting Defence Minister, and Major Salah Salem, Egyptian Minister of National Guidance.

This agreement reached between the Syrian and Egyptian Governments, as stated in the joint statement signed by Syria and Egypt on 2nd March, 1955, was put forward at the meeting.

H.M. King Saud in the name of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom, gave his full approval to all the contents of the joint statement without reservation.

His Majesty has expressed his keen wish that the Conference advocated in the joint statement be convened urgently, to achieve the hopes and aims of the Arab nations.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper.....
Published at.....

File No. 181/2/4
Date March 15 H 1955

FAIDI AL-ATASI'S ARTICLE IN 'LISAN AL-SHA'B'

On 9th March Baghdad radio reported another press article by a Syrian politician criticising the Egyptian-Syrian agreement (cf. No.550, p.42) - by Faidi al-Atasi in the Syrian 'Lisan al-Sha'b'. The following is the substance of the article - which was entitled "Concerning the joint statement" - as it was broadcast.

I have heard the joint Syrian-Egyptian statement and have learned that King Saud has approved it without reservation. I have not heard that Jordan and the Lebanon have also approved it. The new Arab alliance is therefore restricted to Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia. I should have been satisfied with this statement had I not closely examined what has transpired since we met in Cairo on 22nd January, had I not been aware of the Egyptian Military Government's plans to drag the Arab States towards the West under its command and leadership, and had I not had reason to doubt Egypt's intentions at the time when she began her attacks on Iraq.

I remember one day telling Maj. Salah Salim that in trying to refute the Iraqi position he was repudiating nine-tenths of his own contention that it is better to co-operate with the West via the Arab collective security pact. Indeed, we are in agreement with the West, and with John Foster Dulles himself, on this point. In one of his statements, Maj. Salah Salim said that the West needed us as much as we needed it. It is compelled to provide us, as an Arab group, with arms and aid. The Major, however, added that if the Turkish-Iraqi Pact was implemented the Arabs and their children had better be prepared to spend the rest of their lives in refugee camps.

I should perhaps have agreed to the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian alliance had I not seen what I did in Cairo during that fortnight. I became convinced that the present Egyptian Government was seeking to subjugate the Arab Governments by means of threats, to impose its own leadership, and to bargain with the West for the sake of its own interests. Let us tell the truth. Why is democratic Syria binding herself unilaterally to a military dictatorship which deprives its people of even the most elementary democratic freedoms? Have not the peoples seen how Salah Salim took advantage of our freedom? In his official capacity, he should have confined his contacts and statements to the Syrian and Lebanese Governments, but he jumped from conferences with one political party after another, delivering speeches all over Damascus. He spent over an hour speaking at the Maqasid al-Khairiyah Club in Beirut while he prevented the press of his own country from publishing a statement by Faris al-Khouri correcting one wrongly attributed to himself.

The first thing a Government should look into when concluding an agreement with another Government is the satisfaction of the latter's people with it. Is the Al-Asali Government convinced of the Egyptian people's satisfaction with their military dictatorship? Maj. Salah Salim used the "fertile crescent" question in the Lebanon as a threat to make that country knuckle under to him. I should like to tell the Major that neither a fertile nor a barren crescent threatens us but that our system of government is menaced, above all, by himself. (Baghdad 17.00, 9.3.55)

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The London Times

File No. 181/2/4

Published at London

Date 14th March, 1955

**ARAB COUNTRIES'
DEFENCE**

**EGYPT CALLS NEW
MEETING**

EXCLUSION OF IRAQ

From Our Own Correspondent

CAIRO, MARCH 13

Major Salah Salem, the Minister of National Guidance, was quoted to-day as saying that the Prime Ministers of Arab countries had been invited to meet in Cairo on March 20 to consider the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian proposal for the conclusion of a pact of defence and economic cooperation, from which Iraq would be excluded.

The attitude of Syria and the Lebanon appears still to be doubtful. The danger of Israel is very much in the minds of the Syrians and Lebanese at present, and there are sections of opinion in both countries which, although reluctant to dilute the pure milk of Arab nationalism, cannot see how security against Israel will be enhanced by superseding an Arab military alliance which includes Iraq by one which does not.

POSSIBLE COMPROMISE

The recent statement by the Prime Minister of Syria showed that he may be groping towards a compromise on the subject of the Iraq-Turkey treaty which would make it possible for Iraq to adhere to the new collective security pact. The tendency in Cairo to assert that the object proposed in the new pact is, like the Iraq-Turkey agreement, to strengthen defence of the Middle East also encourages hopes of an eventual compromise between the views of Iraq and Egypt.

Dr. Mahmoud Fawzi, the Foreign Minister, received the British Ambassador yesterday for a talk on "current affairs." Major-General Abdul Hakim Amer, Minister of War, has returned to Cairo from a visit of inspection to the Gaza area and Egypt's eastern frontier. To-day he met the Prime Minister, Colonel Nasser, Wing Commander Gamal Salem, the deputy Prime Minister, and Lieutenant-Colonel Zakria Mohieddin, Minister of the Interior, to report on measures taken to strengthen the frontier defences after the recent attack by Israel forces in the Gaza area.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper..... **SUMMARY OF WORLD BROADCASTS** File No. **181/2/4**
Published at..... Date **March 11 1955** .

MEAT
EGYPT'S MOVES FOR A NEW ARAB AGREEMENT

The principal outcome of Maj. Salah Salim's visits to Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Lebanon was the signing of an Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi agreement on measures to be taken for the establishment of an Arab pact on defence and economic co-operation. The agreement was announced in a joint Egyptian-Syrian communique originally drawn up in Damascus, but not published until the Saudi Government's agreement to it could be made public simultaneously, in an Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi joint communique.

The Egyptian-Syrian Joint Communique

Damascus, Cairo and Mecca radios broadcast simultaneously the joint Syrian-Egyptian communique signed in Damascus on 2nd March (No.549, p.32). It was as follows:

The Syrian Premier, Sabri al-Asali, and the Syrian Foreign Minister and acting Defence Minister, Khalid al-Azm, and the Egyptian Minister of National Guidance, Maj. Salah Salim, met in Damascus between 26th February and 2nd March 1955. Since complete agreement exists between the Syrian and the Egyptian Governments on foreign policy, the two sides discussed the present Arab situation and exchanged views on means for strengthening the Arab structure politically, militarily and economically. The two Governments agreed on the following means to achieve their objectives:

- (1) Not to join the Turkish-Iraqi alliance or any other alliances.
 - (2) To set up a joint Arab defence and economic co-operation pact, based on the following principles:
 - (a) Member States will join in repulsing any aggression which may be launched against any member State.
 - (b) A joint command will be set up with a permanent HQ to supervise the training of the military forces which will be placed by each State at the disposal of that command, and to supervise their arming, organisation and distribution according to the joint defence plan. This command will also co-ordinate arms industries and ensure the necessary communications for military purposes.
 - (c) No member State will conclude international military or political agreements without the consent of the other member States.
 - (d) Member States will work to strengthen their economies. To pave the way for comprehensive economic unity the two parties will:
 - (i) establish an Arab Bank to issue Arab currency; a technical committee will be set up to draw up the outlines of this project, in preparation for its approval;
 - (ii) revise the Arab trade system and further strengthen it by exempting local products and industries from custom duties, or by reducing these duties to the lowest possible level;
 - (iii) encourage the establishment of limited liability companies under joint Arab capital to undertake extensive agricultural and industrial projects and air and sea transport, insurance and other activities;
 - (iv) set up an Arab economic council to direct and supervise this economic policy.
- states which approve them to hold a conference as soon as possible. The conference will be drawn up for approval; these provisions will be implemented as soon as they are approved. This conference is to be held during March 1955, and is to include Premiers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, National Defence, Finance and Economy and Chiefs of Staff. (Cairo, Damascus and Mecca 18.30, 6.3.55)
- MEAT**



CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

14 MAR 1955

173/11/21
Box 273
CANBERRA

12/2/4

AUSTRALIAN LEGATION,
CAIRO.

In reply quote NoS12/5/1

Memo No. 158

9th March, 1955

CONFIDENTIAL AND GUARD

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

U.S. MEMORANDUM TO SYRIA

On 9th March the Egyptian press carried leading articles strongly criticising United States policy in the Middle East and specifically attacking a memorandum which was presented by the United States Ambassador in Syria to the Syrian Government.

2. We have learnt from the British Embassy in Damascus that the United States Ambassador has, in fact, presented a Note bearing on the Syrian reaction in concert with Egypt and Saudi Arabia to the Turco-Iraqi Pact, but we have not yet been able to obtain a copy. We understand that the Note was based on a State Department Memorandum outlining a somewhat tougher policy to be applied in the Middle East, and that in substance it states that unless Israel/Arab relations improve and unless the Arab countries accept sensible defence arrangements, United States aid to these countries will be re-considered. It is hoped to forward a copy of the memorandum by next bag.

3. According to the press the Note made the following points:-

- (i) The United States Government believes that the Arab League, in its present position, is too weak to undertake responsibility for Middle East defence or to establish a military set-up capable of carrying out such a task.
- (ii) The Arab League should confine its activities to the cultural and social fields.
- (iii) Syria and the Arab countries should appreciate the vital importance of Middle East defence and should realise that the only way of arranging adequate defence is for them to join in Western alliances in the area.
- (iv) The United States Government believes the policy which the Syrian government is pursuing at present tends to jeopardise the interests of the region.

H.D. White
(H.D. WHITE)
Secretary

M. F. E. [unclear]

Mr. [unclear] 17/3/55

Copy - 173/11/21

CONFIDENTIAL

3/12/76

Memo. No. 218

9th March, 1955

The Acting Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
Canberra, A.C.T.

Turkey-Egyptian Relations

On 5th March, after the agreement in principle was announced between Egypt and Syria on future arrangements for defence, the Turkish Prime Minister issued the following statement to the semi-official Anatolian Agency: -

"In spite of all our care and our sincere feelings of friendship, Egypt is unfortunately persisting in her policy of violence and anger against Turkey and Iraq.

As for the agreement in principle concluded between Syria and Egypt, if what we have learnt is correct, these two States have signed a document which forbids them to conclude international agreements with non-Arab States and, in particular, forbids all collaboration with Turkey and Iraq.

The pressure which Egypt has for some time tried to exert on certain Arab countries has reached a degree which is incompatible even with the notion of the independence of States. Now we are inspired by the deepest feelings of respect for the independence of all States, and in particular for that of our neighbour Syria.

Everyone knows that we have a long common frontier with Syria. Just as it is natural that Syria should be closely interested in events in our country, it is equally natural that we, on our side, should be interested in what happens in Syria. This is why we regard as a serious event the fact that our neighbour and friend Syria, by concluding the agreement in question, should have participated in the ill-judged and sometimes hostile actions and intentions of the Egyptian leaders against Turkey.

Just as we could never accept it for ourselves, neither can we accept for other States that they should be deprived by force of the means of free action and of following a policy which conforms to their interests.

Now it is evident that the Egyptian leaders have obliged the Syrian leaders to submit to their wishes.

If this action and these intentions go further, there will be cause for anxiety about the future of Turco-Egyptian relations which we, in fact, wish to see extremely friendly."

75 (G.A. Jockel)
for Senior External Affairs Representative

→ 181/2/4 :
orig. at 163/11/20

Three Arab States Join in Cairo In New Military-Economic Pact

By ROBERT C. DOTY
Special to The New York Times.

CAIRO, March 6 — Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia announced tonight agreement on measures designed to "strengthen the Arab structure politically, militarily and economically."

Implicit in a joint communiqué issued in Cairo, Damascus and Riyadh, the respective capitals, was the intent to form a new organization of Arab states to replace or rejuvenate the old but not quite dead Arab League. The announcement was the latest gun fired in Egypt's two-month-old campaign to restore the Arab unity that has been shaken by the decision of Iraq to ally herself with Turkey and indirectly with the Western powers.

The announcement said the three states had agreed not to join the Turkish-Iraqi pact or any other such pact. Instead, they would establish a defense organization and instruments of Arab economic cooperation.

This accord is the first fruits of a month of strenuous diplomacy by Major Salah Salem, Egyptian Minister of National Guidance and Sudan Affairs. Major Salem appears also to have taken over the Foreign Affairs portfolio, in fact if not in name.

Since Feb. 18, Major Salem had been negotiating with Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia in an effort to tighten Egypt's links of those countries and keep them from yielding to the temptation to join the new Western-oriented grouping represented by the Turkish-Iraqi pact. The prospect of arms and economic aid from the West for states cooperating in the defensive measures written into that pact has exercised a strong attraction in the Levant.

The evening's communiqué here did not make clear how, other than by the exclusion of Iraq, the new grouping begun by Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia would differ from or be more effective than the Arab League.

Most if not all the objectives set forth have long been on the agenda of the Arab League, but have failed of realization because difficulty achieving unanimity among the eight state of the League.

The League began in 1945 under the impulse of British efforts to build Arab unity. The members are Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen, later joined by Libya.

The new plan is set out by Major Salem, Khaled El-Azm, Syrian Foreign Minister, and Prince Faisal, the Saudi Arabian Premier. It calls upon member states, as does the existing Arab collective security pact, to join in thwarting any aggression directed against any member.

The plan of the new pact is to coordinate the Arab Armies and the coordination of war industries and communications. Much the same program was agreed upon by the Chiefs of Staff of the Arab states during a meeting in Cairo in January.

In the economic field, the three Governments under the new plan would establish an Arab Bank and a common Arab currency, eliminate customs duties among the Arab states, encourage the formation of joint limited liability companies to carry out industrial and agricultural development and set up an Arab Economic Council to coordinate these activities. These points, too, have all been unfulfilled aspirations in the Arab League.

Details of the new proposals would be worked out in consultation with other Arab Governments and, when these details are completed, a conference would be held—before the end of March—to approve and carry out the plans.

Motivation Interesting

Of greater interest to observers here than details of the plan are its motivation and the method by which it was being promoted. As to motivation, it seemed that Cairo's principal concern was to reaffirm Egyptian leadership of the Arab states.

In the purely Arab defensive alignment Egypt would be kingpin. She would be junior member in a pact that included Turkey or any major Western power.

This consideration rather than any ideological affinity for neutralism on the part of Egypt's leaders would seem to be a reason for the recent declarations of solidarity with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India in opposition to all military pacts.

N. Y. TIMES

7/8/55

WASHINGTON POST

7/8/55

3 Nations Join to Form Union of Arab World

CAIRO, March 6 (INS).—Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia announced plans tonight to unite the Arab world militarily and economically. Arab leaders envisage a unified defense force and a single currency for member states.

An agreement concluded last week between Egypt and Syria brought Saudi Arabia's indorsement tonight.

After Saudi Arabia decided to join the new Arab organization, the three countries urged other Arab nations to send Premiers, Foreign Ministers and other officials to an Arab defense conference. A definite time and place for the conference will be set later.

The Syrian-Egyptian plan calls for creation of a single military command to direct Arab armed forces, which would be made available to a "common defense organization."

The new defense organization also would have authority to train, arm and organize the deployment of Arab forces in accordance with Arab policy.

The unified command would also coordinate Arab arms in-

dustries and take over operation of communications facilities needed for defense.

Members would be committed to defend any participating Arab nation that is the victim of aggression.

Details of the Egyptian-Syrian plan, made public tonight, also provided for creation of a central bank to issue a single currency for use of member states.

It also called for elimination or reduction of customs duties, and creation of Arab-financed agencies to develop agriculture, industry and sea and air transportation.

The new Arab unity plan would replace the existing Arab League pact.

Egypt, embroiled in a bitter new dispute over border fighting with Israel, has sharply attacked Iraq's decision to join Turkey in a separate defense alliance.

The proposed new alliance would bar member states from joining any foreign military, political or economic grouping without permission of the new defense organization.

Name of Paper..... The New York Times

File No. 181 / 2 / 4.

Published at.....New York.

Date 7th March 1958.

Three of Arab States Join In Military-Economic Plan

By ROBERT C. DOTY

Special to The New York Times.

CAIRO, March 6—Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia announced tonight agreement on measures to "strengthen the Arab structure politically, militarily and economically." They issued a joint communiqué in Cairo, Damascus and Riyadh, the respective capitals.

Implicit in the communiqué was the intent to form a new organization of Arab states to replace or rejuvenate the old but not quite dead Arab League.

The announcement was the latest gun fired in Egypt's two-month-old campaign to restore the Arab unity that has been shaken by the decision of Iraq to ally herself with Turkey and indirectly with the Western powers.

The announcement said the three states had agreed not to join the Turkish-Iraqi pact or any other such pact. Instead, they would establish a defense organization and instruments of Arab economic cooperation.

This accord is the first fruits of a month of strenuous diplomacy by Major Salah Salem, Egyptian Minister of National Guidance and Sudan Affairs. Major Salem appears also to have taken over the Foreign Affairs portfolio, in fact if not in name.

Egyptian's Leadership

Since Feb. 15, Major Salem has been negotiating with Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia in an effort to tighten Egypt's links to those countries and keep them from yielding to the temptation to join the new Western-oriented grouping represented by the Turkish-Iraqi pact. The prospect of arms and economic aid from the West for states cooperating in the defensive measures written into that pact has exercised a strong attraction in the Levant.

NEW ARAB SET-UP SLATED IN CAIRO

Continued From Page 1

currency, eliminate customs duties among the Arab states, encourage the formation of joint limited liability companies to carry out industrial and agricultural development and set up an Arab Economic Council to coordinate these activities. These points, too, have all been unfulfilled aspirations in the Arab League.

Details of the new proposals would be worked out in consultation with other Arab Governments and, when these details are completed, a conference would be held—before the end of March—to approve and carry out the plans.

In the purely Arab defensive alignment Egypt would be kingpin. She would be a junior member in a pact that included Turkey or any major Western power.

This consideration rather than any ideological affinity for neutralism on the part of Egypt's leaders would seem to be a reason for the recent declarations of solidarity with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India in opposition to all military pacts.

The methods being used to further Egypt's objective are the sometimes misleading and frequently inflammatory propaganda and persuasion by Major Salem, both supported by Saudi Arabian money. Saudi Arabia, giving unquestioning support to Egypt on every occasion, subsidizes newspapers and political figures in all the Arab countries.

the point of negotiating the M
surrender of Japanese and
with the Japanese and
informed Japanese reali-
zation, they cannot expect
to remove the kind of trade
barriers which have been
once had with continental
Europe. Therefore, all the
trade which is entered in the
years before Pearl Harbor, to
South East Asia. That is the
most likely market, and Wash-
ington is coming to realize more
and more that if Southeast
Asia, the Japanese Alliance will
be on good ground, therefore,
the policy here,

P.1.

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST.

SYRIA (Confidential.)

The United States and United Kingdom Governments are concerned with the leftward and neutralist trend of the Syrian Government. They have been considering what they might do to arrest this drift because the Syrian attitude is seriously hindering the development of the Turco-Iraqi Pact as a nucleus for Middle East Defence.

ANGLO-IRAQI RELATIONS (Confidential)

Negotiations between the British and Iraqi Government concerning United Kingdom adhesion to the Turco-Iraqi Pact and revision of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty are progressing rapidly. It is hoped to sign the necessary agreements in Bagdad on 4th April, 1955.

F 181/2/4

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The London Times

File No. 181/2/4

Published at London

Date 1st March 1958

EGYPT-SYRIA TREATY PROPOSALS

MILITARY AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION

CAIRO, March 6.—A joint statement was issued to-night giving details of the agreement reached between Egypt and Syria. The main points in a plan to strengthen the military, political, and economic structure of the Arab world are:—

The signatories will not join the Turkish-Iraq pact or any other alliance without the consent of the other member States.

The organizing of Arab defensive and economic cooperation to ward off aggression against any country in the area.

The setting up of a permanent command to supervise the training of military forces placed under the command and to arm, organize, and deploy them in accordance with the joint defensive policy. This command will also coordinate military industries and communications required for military purposes.

The statement says the Governments of the two countries will draft a treaty on these lines and will invite representatives of countries which approve the terms to a conference, probably this month.—
Exchange.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANBERRA.

Name of Paper The London Times

File No. 181/2/4

Published at London

Date 18 March 1956

NEW ARAB PACT
SIGNATURE BY EGYPT AND SYRIA
 DAMASCUS, MARCH 3
 Major Salem, the Egyptian Minister of National Guidance, said here to-day that Egypt and Syria had signed a new agreement for the creation of an Arab defence alliance.
 The agreement had been signed last night by the Syrian Prime Minister, Sabri el-Assali, and the foreign minister, Khaled el-Azem, and for Egypt by Major Salem and Brigadier Riad, director of Arab affairs at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry. A copy of the agreement was to be sent to Saudi Arabia for their consideration. Major Salem made his announcement before leaving with Khaled el-Azem for Amman.—*Reuter*.

INVITATIONS TO OTHER ARAB STATES
 FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT
 AMMAN, MARCH 3
 Major Salem and Khaled el-Azam arrived here by air from Damascus and held a two hours' meeting with the Prime Minister, Tewfic Abul Huda, in the presence of the Foreign Minister, Waleed Salah.
 Major Salem said afterwards that the project which had been agreed upon by the Syrian and Egyptian Governments had been offered to the Jordan Prime Minister, who had promised that his Government would study it. Major Salem also said that he and Khaled el-Azam would leave to-morrow for Beirut for a similar purpose.

C.